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The Aesthetics of Hegemony

Sloanism and Mass Persuasion in the United States, 1900-1930

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I hereby declare that this thesis has not been submitted, either in the same or different form to this or any other University for a degree.

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Summary

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Theories regarding the power of the United States in the International Political-Economic order conventionally treat issues of culture and aesthetics as functional aspects of the system of mass production created in the early 20th century. The 'hegemony' of the United States is attributed to the ability of its political-economic elites to create and maintain 'consensus' amongst other nations. Cultural manifestations of American hegemony are regarded as 'soft' signposts of this power, serving to entrench the values of American capitalism at a global level. Yet critical theories of international political economy have evaded analysing the 'appeal' of this cultural power, prioritizing materialist aspects of consensus formation such as the compromises made between capital and labour during the early 20th century during the rise of the mass production society.

The task of this thesis is to provide the theoretical tools which allow critical evaluations of American hegemony to move beyond these materialist conceptions of cultural power. It is argued that an *aesthetic* approach to hegemony can fully realize the enduring power of American culture in political-economic terms. It does so by critically re-situating the terms of hegemony in *Sloanism*, which provides a more adequate template for realizing the power and meaning of mass *consumption* for non-elite social agents. Sloanism's focus on branding and stylistic obsolescence demonstrates that the 'aesthetics' of hegemony can be grasped by evaluating the role of style and design in a mass production, mass consumption society. It therefore places epistemological priority on the contestations over cultural meanings of style, and the rise of ideals of upward social mobility which upset materialist expectations of a clearly discernable characteristics for different social groups.

This in turn allows a questioning of the stability of norms, values and interests of ruling elites. It also restores the social agency of non-elite groups who contribute to 'hegemony' through the provision of styles, techniques and designs that represented challenges to received ideas of cultural order. Furthermore in the context of early 20th century, new techniques of mass persuasion in advertising and public relations provide a 'site ' in which the discordant and antagonistic aesthetic values of different social groups resolve in an uneasy tension- one that is nonetheless powerful enough to hold a durable cultural power, celebrating both upward social mobility and aspirations of abundance.

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Contents

Introduction

Narrating American History: Exceptionalism, Manifest Destiny and the Promise of Abundance

America's gradual ascent as a global power, and self-recognition as one, begins in the aftermath of the Civil War, the traumas of Southern Reconstruction and the rise of its formidable industrial power during the Gilded Age following the Panic of 1873. By the beginning of the 20th century, with Britain facing off Western European contender challenges in the Scramble for Africa, the stability of the international order that accompanied the 19th century *Pax Brittanica* began to unravel, with succesive inter-European conflicts paving the way for a new international political-economic system of the capitalist world anchored in American military, political and economic supremacy after 1945.

The story of this expeditious rise finds its most popular explanation in the idea of American 'exceptionalism.' The 'exceptional' set of circumstances that Providence bestowed upon 19th century America include both an *absence* of factors[1] that prevailed in the 'Old World,' and *historical* factors that were unique to the pioneering spirit of Anglo-American settlement of the West.[2] The *lack* of a feudal past, hereditary aristocracy and dispossesed proletariat, for commentators like Louis Hartz, meant that 'Americans did not have to wage a revolution against privilege and property,' and that in contradistinction to the travails of European societies of the 19th century[3] 'class-based ideologies and modes of political organisation held no appeal to them...from the very outset Americans have been keen Lockean individualists whose pragmatic politics have always been quintessentially liberal.'[4] The providential *historical* factors, on the other hand, finding its most enduring narrative in the 'Frontier Thesis,' affirms the confrontation of European settlers with the vast American wilderness as

[1] Halpern, Rick and Morris, Jonathon 'The Persistence of Exceptionalism: Class Formation and the Comparative Method,' in Rick Halpern and Jonathon Morris (eds.) *American Exceptionalism? US Working-Class Formation in an International Context*, Basingstoke, Macmillan, 1997 pg. 1

[2] Carroll, Peter and Noble, David *The Free and the Unfree: A New History of the United States*, London, Penguin, 1977 pg. 237

[3] Davis, Mike *Prisoners of the American Dream: Politics and Economy in the History of the US Working Class*. Chapter 1 'Why the American Working Class is Different' provides an detailed account of the differences between US working class organized labour and its European counterparts in the 19th century. Davis argues that whilst working class consciousness and meaningful organized labour existed in the US, the parameters of the *demands* made by working classes were not fought in the terrain of political enfranchisement, lending it a different character and aspirations.

[4] Halpern, Rick and Morris, Jonathon 'The Persistence of Exceptionalism: Class Formation and the Comparative Method,' in Rick Halpern and Jonathon Morris (eds.) *American Exceptionalism? US Working-Class Formation in an International Context*, Basingstoke, Macmillan, 1977 pg. 2

the key to unlocking America's past. In this historiographical rendition, 'the uniqueness of America came from breaking the links with the Old World conception of place.'[5]

"*Into this vast, shaggy continent of ours the first feeble tide of European settlement. European men, institutions and ideas were lodged in the American Wilderness, and this great American West took them to her bosom, taught them a new way of looking upon the destiny of the common man, trained them in adaptation to the conditions of the New World. And ever as society on her eastern border grew to resemble the Old World in its social forms, as it began to lose faith in the ideal of democracy, she opened new provinces, and dowered democracies in her most distant domains*."[6]

Turner's thesis was first delivered at the Columbian Exposition in Chicago in 1893 and went on to dominate academic American History for the next fifty years, and marks a turning point 'as a crucial event in the evolution of historical scholarship from Victorian *belles lettres* into a modern state-certified social science.'[7] Yet Turner's explanation was also a reworking of historical language into a form 'that harmonized well with the tacit belief of his reader,' and was decisively convincing enough that by 1932 its 'dominated synthetic understandings of the American past,' so as to provide a 'semblance and conceptual stability in a period where the material reality suggested not only a breaking down of the celebrated economic system underpinning America's ascent, but turmoil amongst and within the society itself.'[8] Crucially, it was delivered just five years before the outbreak of the Spanish-American War, when the United States 'broke free' of its own frontier, with political and military leaders excavating its spirit to justify full scale military intervention and its first dominion of empire.
If the idea of American exceptionalism helped to shape understandings of the American past and the 'unique conditions' that led to its industrial and political rise, the expansionist nature of the Union was anchored in the ideals of *Manifest Destiny*. This discourse, to stretch US influence 'until the whole boundless continent is ours,'[9] expressed the desire to spread the brilliance of republican governance and 'blessings of political liberty':

[5] Carroll, Peter and Noble, David *The Free and the Unfree: A New History of the United States*, London, Penguin, 1977 pg. 237
[6] From Frederick Jackson Turner 'The Significance of the Frontier in American History,' in Carroll, Peter and Noble, David *The Free and the Unfree: A New History of the United States*, London, Penguin, 1977 pg. 238
[7] Klein, Kerwin Lee Frontiers of Historical Imagination: Narrating the European Conquest of Native America, 1890-1990, Berkeley, University of California Press, 1997, pg.
[8] Ibid., pg
[9] Paraphrase of John L. O'Sullivan in Carroll, Peter and Noble, David *The Free and the Unfree: A New History of the United States*, London, Penguin, 1977 pg. 167

"*By carrying these institutions across the continent, American expansion would broaden the foundations of liberty, extend the area of freedom and elevate the benighted people who still lived under inferior forms of government*."[10]

Based on ideas of ethnic supremacy, 'manifest destiny' was the primary discursive anchor that justified westward expansion and European conquest and settlement of Native lands during the 19th century. Ordering the 'virtue' of their Lockean heritage against the savagery of 'benighted people,' the mid-19th century hosted the final subordination of Jefferson's principles of peaceful co-existence with Native Americans, and saw the continual violation of treaties with both Natives and the European Imperial power of Great Britain, France and Spain, before confronting Mexico over the issue of Texas during the Mexican-American war between 1845 and 1848. In the consequent 'peace settlement' in the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, 'the United States obtained California, New Mexico and the disputed Rio Grande areas for $15,000,000.'[11] Carroll and Noble argue that the principles of 'American continentalism' contained internal contradictions that would set the tone for future American political-economic policies, mediating the tense line between ideals of racial exclusion and the spread of liberal democratic institutions, or the paradox of 'the institutionalization of space and the advocacy of geographic *mobility*,' for 'it was only by imposing rigid territorial order on non-WASP peoples that white Americans could preserve a sense of geographical mobility.'[12]

If 'manifest destiny,' was the key discursive anchor that justified expansion at the expense of the material and spiritual dismantling of Native societies and cultures, then the Turner' Frontier Thesis of 1893 acted as a modernized, 'scientific' assertion of American expansionism during the Spanish-American War, where the principles of the Monroe doctrine coupled with the military power derived from the 'Second Industrial Revolution' left no one in doubt about the supremacy of the United States in the Western Hemisphere, paving the way for 'the American century':

The 'closing of the frontier,' as such never ended. Though the United States would experience periods of 'isolationism' in the first half of the 20th century, most notably in its initial intransigence to intervene in the two World Wars and the reluctance to extoll its

[10] Carroll, Peter and Noble, David *The Free and the Unfree: A New History of the United States*, London, Penguin, 1977 pg. 167
[11] Ibid., pg 175
[12] Ibid., pg 173

principles of liberal democracy in genuine global leadership in the interwar period, the constant involvement of American corporations and politics in Central and South America showcase a change from spreading the institutions of liberal democracy to spreading and benefitting from corporate and industrial power and influence. This power was derived from the completion of continental expansion, paving the way for a full-scale national industrialization, and the potential fulfillment of the promises of abundance and fecundity that had co-existed with manifest destiny as motifs and 'lyrics' justfying westward expansion.[13] This promise of abundance would finally be realized in the mass production factories of the Ford corporation at River Rouge and Highland.[14]

"*Under the influence of the new ideology that had grown up with capitalism and mechanical invention, the leading minds of the period thought that mankind had found the secret of happiness by turning its attention to the quantitative solution of all its problems*."[15]

The American Century: Global Hegemony and American Popular Culture

The second half of the 20th century witnessed a dramatic expansion of American corporate activity around the world. American political-economic dominance over the rest of the capitalist world was achieved following the Second World War, when American leaders finally proved willing to embrace global leadership. They did so under the conditions that the form of American Capitalism borne from its own 'exceptional' 19th century conditions would become the primary template for other nations to follow and emulate. American corporations gained footholds in all the capitalist countries. The system of mass production perfected by Henry Ford in the early 20th century became the standard model of corporate industry all over the world, with non-capitalist societies also utilizing the methods of mass production to stimulate their own domestic industrialization. As such, the 20th century has often been noted as the 'American Century,' a term originally quoted by media mogul and *Time* magazine founder Henry Luce in 1941 to galvanise support for US entry into World War II.[16]

By the onset of the 21st century, with the Communist world defeated, very few nations had been left untouched by the indelible mark of American influence. American products were to

[13] Lears, Jackson *Fables of Abundance: A Cultural History of Advertising in America*, Basic Books, 1995, pg. 19
[14] Smith, Terry *Making the Modern: Industry, Art and Design in America*, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1993, pg. 2
[15] James, CLR, in Anna Grimshaw and Keith Hart (eds.) *American Civilization*, London, Blackwell, 1993, pg. 29
[16] Hogan, Michael *The Ambiguous Legacy: US Foreign Relations in the 'American Century,'* Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1999, pg. 20

be found everywhere and its political-economic influence appeared to translate into a cultural grip over the rest of the world- a 'soft,' subtle form of power that lingered in the daily lives of everyone. From the products people bought, to the entertainments consumed in television and film, it seemed that the promises of manifest destiny had been finally fulfilled. A *fully* integrated world system, technologically, culturally and economically, had been created for the first time. 'Signposts' and 'symbols' of this enduring power were to be found everywhere, with corporate logos of companies such as McDonald's and Coca-Cola assuming more relevance than national flags.[17] American music and film filtered through television screens, overpowering centuries-old national traditions in a short amount of time. It seemed that once any nation, or group of people, were exposed to these American products, images and tastes, there was no turning back, no ability to escape from or isolate against this soft power. This power is known as American *hegemony*, a dominance of the international system so complete that it achieves the acquiescence of less powerful nations *without* demonstrations of its military supremacy. To put it another way, American power was *consented* to by less powerful nations, who acquiesced to the political-economic and cultural values of the United States.

As a result, explanations of *why it has been so hard to resist* American hegemony have abounded in academic discourse, as scholars sought to unravel and interrogate the relationships of power that affirm American hegemony at military, political-economic and socio-cultural levels. In explaining the rise of the 'American Century,' academics and journalists alike have sought to isolate particular *areas* of American influence that are *graspable by the tools provided by social science*. As such, critical evaluations of American power and influence have tended to analyse changes (and consistencies) in American foreign policy and American corporate activity around the world. Depending on the 'school of thought,' different social actors, institutions and processes have been prioritized as the primary units of analysis from which theories and explanations of American power derive from. Some of the more sophisticated renditions have integrated political and economic analyses, demonstrating sensitivity to American hegemony amongst both *states* and *markets* simultaneously. One such school is that of critical International Political Economy.

[17] Discussion about the global visibility of American corporate brands and logos finds it most popular expression in Naomi Klein's *No Logo*, published in 1999. See section 'No Space,' in Klein, Naomi *No Logo*, Picador, 1999.

Yet despite the richness, diversity and quantity of scholarly work dedicated to evaluating the historical rise of American power, the manner in which that power *manifests* in cultural terms has been curiously evasive. The 'soft' power of American *popular* culture is often used to explain the *grip* of American hegemony, but *why* and *how* this popular culture finds its *appeal* is sidestepped. There is much talk about the enduring power of corporate logos, American advertising and Hollywood film industry without ever really getting to the heart of why this would be appealing to non-Americans in the first place. Instead, these cultural phenomena appear to 'hang over the heads' of people, instantaneously transforming their tastes and attitudes- in short, *Americanizing* them. As such, a whole series of American cultural artefacts, fashions, styles and tastes exist only to serve the 'fundamentals' of expanding American political-economic power. Industries such as advertising are regarded as corollaries of capitalist elites, serving in some cases to deceive and manipulate the global public into 'buying' into the *American way of life*. As mentioned before, the constant stream of images, films and sounds emerging from the United States all over the world, serves to reinforce that perspective.

Aesthetics and Hegemony

The neo-Gramscians have attempted to theorize the rise of American power. Taking inspiration from Antonio Gramsci's essay 'Americanism and Fordism,' *hegemony* as articulated by neo-Gramscians concentrates on evaluating the 'consensual' branches of political-economic power. In other words, they seek to ask what mechanisms exist that empowers dominant elites over other groups in society without recourse to 'coercive' branches of power such as the military and police. Like Gramsci himself, scholars like Robert Cox, Mark Rupert, Kees Van der Pijl and William Robinson have sought to interrogate the *ideological apparatuses* through which hegemony works. They do this by tracing American hegemony *back* to the site from which the United States established the political-economic model that would be later exported around the world: the Ford factory. Using the tools of social scientific explanation, neo-Gramscians focus on the rise of 'productivist' ideologies and the relationships between capitalists and labour that resulted in class *compromises*.[18] Through these sets of compromises, neo-Gramscians argue that capitalists were able to articulate their own interests as *the general interest of society*, thereby placating worker

[18] Rupert, Mark *Producing Hegemony: The Politics of Mass Production and American Global Power* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995, pg. 59

resistance to the changes initiated by the system of mass production. The question is *how* elite interests were able to achieve a consensus amongst the rest of American society? What were the mechanisms existing used to make this possible, without needing to enforce it in an authoritarian or coercive manner?

This is where the problematique lies for this thesis. Focusing on the Marxist categories of capital and labour, neo-Gramscians have prioritized certain social groups that are involved in the process of *hegemony*. Of particular relevance here is Mark Rupert's *Producing Hegemony: The Politics of Mass Production and American Global Power* (1995), which traces American global hegemony back to the site of the development of mass production techniques in early 20th century America. However, they neglect other social groups or classes that might also contribute to this process. They explain that there are mechanisms in society that contribute to the 'consensualization' of power, without fully exploring *what* those mechanisms are, or *who contributes* to them. This is because the tools of social science prioritize certain categories of analysis and methodologies of study. An object of phenomenon of study is *a priori* conceived in a certain way, as a certain process. In terms of explaining the rise and strength of American global power, neo-Gramscians argue that it is anchored in a particular historical process of mass production, and the social relationships and interests that *developed out of that process*. It is intimated about *how* the *hegemony* of American power might be exercised, but *not* what processes lend it such a distinct and historically unique power. [19]

When we think about the 'symbols' and 'signs' of American *soft* power, things such as advertising, corporate branding, television and film, control of global media and more generally mass produced commodities themselves are all given as explanations. It seems that *culture* and *consumption* are the 'sites' in which American global power manifests itself. It is where that power is 'understood' or made apprehendable by individuals in society. It then appears strange that scholars seeking to explain American power evade questions of culture and consumption, and how they might bring the meaning of power into the daily lives of individuals. Is this because the *tools* of neo-Gramscian theory do not provide the requisite 'space' for considering those questions? It is the contention of this thesis that looking at the *aesthetic* dimension of *hegemony* can provide a critical account of those questions of culture

[19] Scott-Smith, Giles *The Politics of Apolitical Culture: The Congress for Cultural Freedom and the Political Economy of American Hegemony 1945-1955*, London, Routledge, 2002.

and consumption that *compliments* the neo-Gramscian oeuvre. In other words, it still seeks to resolve questions of the articulation and dissemination of power as laid out in the neo-Gramscian framework, but offers an alternative 'terrain' of conceptualizing the processes of hegemony. Aesthetics is significant for hegemony because it is not *just about the materialist* aspect of political-economy. In other words, the period in question was not just about a series of compromises that raised wages for workers in order to 'compensate' them. Rather, it was about the *conveyance* of social values. It was not about 'who gets what,' but what social values and ideas were conveyed that made mass consumption such an appealing domain of activity. Aesthetics can therefore better capture ideas of status and mobility that cannot be addressed in a materialist framework. It should be noted however, that it requires a 're-animation' of the precise period of history from which the building blocks of neo-Gramscian theory emerge from; that is to say the early 20th Fordist period in the United States. For this reason, Mark Rupert's *Producing Hegemony* acts as the most relevant neo-Gramscian work to pursue how that very period was also inscribed with contestations of art and culture that lent American *hegemony* an historically distinct texture. We are ultimately concerned here, with the dynamics that structures the consolidation of capitalist hegemony *within* the during 1900-1930, rather than the extension of US hegemony on a world scale after 1945. From this, the key contribution is how the domain of aesthetics and the agencies of mass persuasion offer a way of explaining the dynamics structuring the consolidation of capitalist hegemony.

The importance of *aesthetics* is that it offers a 'non-rational' mode of cognition. It offers an opportunity to grasp and bring importance to processes, social agents and institutions that are ignored or evaded in the schema of critical political economy. This evasion is not *intended*, but rather a part of the limited field of vision of the discipline. If the *aesthetic* dimension is taken into account, phenomena such as styles, fashions and tastes become *central* to the way hegemony (and more broadly American global power) operates. The leitmotifs of mass consumption are then not rendered as 'afterthoughts' or corollaries to the fundamentals of mass production. As such the processes and ideas that make mass consumption a powerful force in the daily activities of individuals are not 'functional' aspects of capitalist society. Indeed, it will be explored that those 'processes and ideas' actually provide a new and unique grammar to understand the power of the 'American way of life.' To put in another way, the *aesthetic* provides a template for understanding *why* mass consumption became popular. It allows the exploration of why it held *socio-cultural* appeal for those individuals and social classes who were not a part of political-economic or socio-cultural elites. As such, this thesis,

methodologically, seeks to extrapolate the aesthetic contestations between different social groups as well as affirm the importance of social agents such as advertisers and public relations practioners who acted as auxilliaries to the capitalist political-economic elite. Their practices and techniques grounded ideals and expectation of mass production and mass consumption amongst a mass society. And so this thesis must task itself with integrating studies from American History, Cultural Studies and sociological accounts of advertising and public relations in order for neo-Gramscian IPE to have a substantive encounter with those practices and techniques at a theoretical level.

How does this help us to understand the process of hegemony? The neo-Gramscian template argues that the moment of consent in hegemony occurs through the dissemination of the norms, values and interests of elite groups. That their values are somehow 'normalized' amongst the rest of society. An aesthetic template showcases that variant norms and values of different social groups contend *against one and other*, synthesizing different cultural values that provide a new vocabulary and imagization of power. This is of particular importance for the period of study of this thesis. For during the United States between 1900 and 1930, there is a growing importance of the *medias* of dissemination. This includes the widening circulation of newspapers, magazines, journals and 'lifestyle' supplements. It also includes relatively new 'arts' of photography and cinema. Finally, the growth of the advertising industry and changes in the techniques of advertising art become a prominent feature of the daily lives of Americans. The early 20th century witnessed the rise of a *mass persuasion* around which these medias became vital channels through which individuals began to understand their transforming material and social environment. Did these medias contribute to the articulation of *hegemony*? And if so, what were the 'norms,' and 'values' of the social agents who were producing the words, images and styles of these medias. Do the techniques and styles involved in these medias suggest anything about the way in which hegemony operates in society, its process of articulation and dissemination?

As mentioned before, the theoretical frameworks of neo-Gramscianism allows us to 'see' these processes as 'functional' aspects of capitalist society. They exist to reinforce the dominance of capitalist ideology and the power of the social agents and institutions that benefit from from the expansion of capitalism. An *aesthetic* template, on the other hand, allows us to grasp the *meanings* and values of these new medias and how the art and information produced by them is apprehended by non-elite groups. It also allows the

possibility of explaining how non-elite individuals and social groups contribute their own ideas of culture, society and life to the 'values' and 'norms' of hegemony. As such, an aesthetic approach *fulfills* the neo-Gramscian promise of working out the processes of consensualizing power, and why that power holds some kind of appeal for non-elite groups. Traditions of Marxism that have focused on questions of culture and aesthetics, such as contained in the work of Walter Benjamin and the Gramscian-focused scholarship of Raymond Williams have attempted to trace the power of capitalist society by evaluating transformations in cultural and artistic practices. They provide tools of an aesthetic approach that can be appropriated by neo-Gramscian political-economic theory to explore the processes of hegemony. They allow a perspective that privileges alternative social agents and institutions that contribute to the consensualization of a dominant ideology, or 'way of life.'

An aesthetic approach also allows an interrogation of the actual 'values' and 'norms' of these different social groups and whether or not they make a difference to how the 'soft' power of American hegemony is understood. In the specific case of early 20th century America, this is important because of the *diversification* of social classes, tastes and styles that occurred. For example, the rise of artistic modernism contributed techniques of design and illustration that became hallmarks of both the commodities produced (such as the automobile) as well as the channels of persuasion (for example, the advertising industry). In an aesthetic rendition of hegemony, design features of commodities and the 'artistic' ways in which they were marketed do not appear as 'afterthoughts' of the production system, but were actually cultural challenges to the socio-political order of the late 19th century. As such, they are moments where 'counter-hegemonic' practices and ideas form an intrinsic feature of the way American hegemony emerged. Moreover, it requires consideration of the role of potential 'organic intellectuals,'- such as artists, advertisers, commodity designers, newspaper editors and photographers- have in inscribing hegemony with particular values that are distinct to the period in which their agency become of importance to capital. As chapters 4 and 5 will demonstrate, artists and cultural producers influenced by ideas from the left-wing political spectrum (from tempered social democracy to anarchism) often found work in the early advertising and public relations agencies that served emergent corporate interests.

The 'alternative' terrain that aesthetics contributes to an understanding of hegemony is precisely the focus it provides on the *emotional*, *sentimental*, and *sensual* aspects of cultural artefacts, discourses and social processes. The 'aesthetics' of hegemony prioritize those

domains of cognition and explanation that escape the traditional tools of social science. In the case of how *hegemony* developed in early 20th century America, it can more fully explore the styles, fashions and tastes that contribute to the *power* of the 'American way of life.' It therefore 're-situates' the neo-Gramscian framework in the same period of history, but can showcase a different explanation of the same processes of power that neo-Gramscians seek to uncover. In order to fulfill this, the following section will show why re-situating the development of mass production-mass consumption society in a framework of 'Sloanism' is more useful in this sense than the traditional concept of 'Fordism.'

Fordism or Sloanism?

'Fordism' is a term used for explaining the system of mass production of commodities that emerged in the United States between 1900 and 1930. In a wide range of social scientific disciplines it is also used as a *heuristic* framework for analysing the transformation of relationships between capitalist industry and workers during that period. Anchored in the *relationships* of production, it has been argued that tensions between capitalists and workers were 'resolved' in the United States *within* the site of production. Henry Ford's introduction of the '$5 day' for his factory workers is regarded as a crucial departure point in this sense. Ford's idea was that by raising the wages of his workers, they would be less inclined towards unionization, striking, and industrial sabotage. Furthermore, the increased income of workers meant that they would be more likely to be able to afford the very products they were producing. In a sense, this artificial raising of the worker's wage was initiated in order to *stimulate* demand for consumer goods, a hallmark of Keynesian economic policy-making.

The importance of this is that the demand for goods such as automobiles had previously been the preserve of 'leisure classes.' The high costs of production and craftsmanship for individual parts for the automobile meant that only a small minority of society could afford the final product. The system of mass production perfected by Ford dramatically reduced the costs of automobile production through a gradual process of replacing the craft performed by individual skilled workers by machines. As a consequence, automobiles became more affordable to salaried workers for the first time. The automobile that represented the culmination of this system of mass production was the Ford Model T, released in 1908. It was the first automobile that was mass produced with completely interchangeable parts and marketed towards the middle classes.

However, the replacement of individual worker skill by machines also had consequences for the relations of production and management within the factory. Workers suffered 'de-skilling' in the sense that their role in the production of the automobile was reduced to contributing, or 'adding' parts of the automobile to the assembly line of manufacturing. Their tasks were repetitive and because of the low level skill involved, found their jobs were easily replaceable by other non-skilled labourers. This process of de-skilling is regarded by Marxists as completing the 'alienation' of the worker from their product and self, compelling them to find refuge in a meaningless world of commodities.

Another additional feature of this new system of mass production was the introduction of the role of monitoring workers. Influenced by ideals of efficiency in methods of production that would save *time* in the production process (known as 'Scientific Management'), a new layer of management was introduced in the factory to ensure that workers were completing their tasks on time and adhering to company policies of behaviour. This new layer of management is considered to be a part of a broader transformation of corporate capitalism known as the 'managerial revolution.' The managerial revolution included the emergence of specialized 'departments' in corporations that dealt with administrative work and bureaucratic management. It is regarded as having further distanced the worker from the capitalist owner, with internal tensions and problems within the factory being dealt with by a specialist corps of 'white collar' assistants. These people carried out the tasks of monitoring and controlling workers- or 'disciplining'.

The ideas developed under the aegis of Fordism had profound consequences for American society, and gradually the rest of the capitalist world. The Fordist system, by dramatically decreasing the costs of production *and* increasing the wages of workers, is seen as initiating a corollary phenomenon of 'mass consumption.' Whereas in the 19th century the phenomenon of consumption of commodity goods was an activity conducted by a limited section of society, the early to mid 20th century witnessed a rise in the demand for consumption by middle and working class groups. Consumption became a daily, everyday life phenomenon as attested to by the sheer rise in numbers of department stores and the diversification of commodity goods that were to be produced and sold. The market place for consumer goods became a central, societal-wide node of daily activity. The questions emerging from this is *how* and *why* mass consumption became such a popular activity? How were people

convinced that they should now purchase goods that had previously been regarded as luxury items? It is at this juncture that it is relevant to introduce the concept of 'Sloanism.'

Alfred Sloan became Chairman of General Motors in 1923. General Motors was Ford's chief rival throughout the 1920s, and by the end of the decade had surpassed Ford in terms of market share in the automobile industry.[20] Like Ford, Sloan's background was in engineering, and shared with Ford a reverence for the principles of 'Scientific Management,' in order to save time and costs of production. General Motors also utilized a similar method of machine-led mass production. However, in order to wrest back market share from Ford and the phenomenal success and popularity of the Model T, Sloan introduced a series of key innovations that would also create an enduring legacy for the capitalist world, the most important of which were *brand differentiation* and *planned obsolescence*.

Brand differentiation introduced a 'hierarchy' of styles in automobile production. Rather than producing the same model of automobile, Sloan created five different 'brands' of automobile-the *Chevrolet, Pontiac, Oldsmobile, Buick* and *Cadillac* between 1923 and 1927. These automobiles had different designs and features, and were marketed at different social classes in society. *Planned obsolescence* refers to 'in-built' features of the *style* and *technicality* of the product that are designed to either 'go out of fashion,' or make its usage redundant. In the case of General Motors' automobiles, there are two main consequences of these strategies.

The first and most immediate consequence relates to the technical obsolescence of the automobile, or parts of the automobile. By engineering an automobile that would become unusable within a few years, consumers would have to buy the product again. This seemingly mundane aspect is crucial to the expansion of mass consumption as a form of daily activity described above. Ford's idea was to raise the wages of salaried workers so that they could afford the product. Sloan's idea was that those workers should keep buying the same product over and again. As such, this engenders *perpetual consumption*, an artificial 'demand' for the product created through its own obsolescence.

The second and most important consequence is the introduction of a hierarchy of 'styles' to the automobile industry. Sloan's idea in this was to engineer a culture, or idea, amongst

[20] Farber, David *Sloan Rules: Alfred. P Sloan and the Triumph of General Motors*, London, The University of Chicago Press, 2002, pg.28

people that the *brand represented the social status of the individual that purchased it*. The Cadillac, for example, was designed and marketed for the tastes of the upper classes. The Chevrolet, at the bottom of the ladder in this brand hierarchy, was marketed towards lower income groups. Tellingly, Sloan utilized advertising campaigns to suggest a culture of *stylistic emulation*. That is to say, that lower income groups could demonstrate their ability to 'climb the ladder' of socio-cultural hierarchy by saving money and purchasing the brand that was one-rung above their actual social status. The idea of Sloan was to make the purchasing of the 'higher' brand a goal for individuals; to 'emulate' and 'aspire' towards the more refined and expensive design and features of the higher brand.

In order to make these strategies realizable, Sloan had to pay closer attention to the tastes and design preferences of the different income groups that the automobiles were marketed towards. Market researchers, advertisers, industrial designers all play a more prominent role in the achievement of these strategies than in the Ford Corporation (Ford himself was notoriously resistant to advertising). More detail was involved in the actual design and manufacture of the automobile as a result of the stylistic differentiation of brands. Ideas of style, fashion and art filtered through into General Motors in order to keep this idea of *perpetual consumption* alive and profitable. The success of General Motors in overhauling Ford's market share by 1928 attests to the viability of the Sloanist model.

It should be mentioned also what both Ford and Sloan *envisioned* their automobiles as. Ford's idea of the Model T was a 'car for everyone.' He prized its efficiency, durability, simple design, and ease of replacing broken parts. His 'social' objective was that every working person in America could one day afford this model. As such, Ford had a utilitarian attitude underpinning his vision of the relationship between industry and society. For Ford, the Model T represented the culmination of a system of perfectibility in production methods that he had personally contributed towards. The *aesthetic* of Fordism as such celebrates the *system* that brought the Model T into being.

Sloan's ideas on the other hand, were about perpetually injecting the design and marketing of the automobile industry with new styles in order to keep the motor of consumption perpetually in motion. Focusing more instrumentally on profitability, Sloan's ideas were not motivated by aesthetic concerns as such. However, he manoeuvred into the industry individuals whose tasks were to integrate the latest styles and techniques of art and design

into the manufacturing process *and* marketing process. Placing emphasis on a culture of emulation and aspiration to move up the ladder of social hierarchy *through* the consumption of particular brands, the *aesthetic* of Sloanism celebrates the style of the product itself, rather than the system that brought it into existence.

Structure of the Thesis

Chapter 1 surveys the key literature from the three key areas of inquiry for this thesis: a) the relationship between political economy and culture b) the rise of a mass persuasion complex, and c) the changing structures of class and consciousness. These literatures are synthesized in a way that seeks to interrogate the 'norms' and 'values' of the 'hegemonic' moment in early 20th century, during the embryonic crystallization of a Sloanist Political-Economic formation.

The central claim of Chapter 1 is that Edward Bernays' treatise in *Propaganda* offers a powerful normative vision of *how ruling elites should mobilise the agencies of mass persuasion to pursue their interests and circumvent challenges to their power*. By explicitly detailing an 'invisible' government and offering advice and guidance on how to engineer societal-wide consensus for both corporations and politicians, Bernays unwittingly addresses a key concern of the neo-Gramscian oeuvre, *hegemony*, providing strategic policies to contain the ire of the masses *whilst simultaneously embedding the norms and values of the ruling elite amongst those masses.*

It is claimed that the role of mass persuasion (as outlined by Bernays) is as a *portal* through which the hegemonic moment- the moment of 'consent'- is achieved and articulated through. However, both Bernays and neo-Gramscians stress the *co-ordinated* and strategic nature of power relations in the Fordist context; the 'invisible' government of Bernays resonates with Robert Cox's idea of *nébuleuse*, in the sense of a constellation of power located out of reach and out of sight from the social groups and individuals subordinated beneath the weight of ruling class hegemony. However, I argue that this dismisses the role of subordinated groups and counter-hegemonic ideals that contribute (often willingly) to this period of rapid transformation. It also portrays the idea that the needs and desires of those groups are being engineered from above for the sake of a particular, pecuniary rationality that occupies the norms and values of ruling elites.

Chapter 2 goes on to outline the key theoretical tools provided by i) neo-Gramscian political economy and ii) the lineage of Marxist aesthetics and cultural theory, focusing on Walter Benjamin's *The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction* and Raymond Williams' tripartite schema of hegemony. The theory section aims to elaborate *how* a critical interrogation of the aesthetic contestations taking place in early 20th century America can contribute to the neo-Gramscian understanding of hegemony.

The central theoretical claim of Chapter 2 rests on *shifting the terrain of analysis* from Fordism to Sloanism. I argue that Sloanism is a heuristic concept that captures the dynamic transformation of American society and political-economy because it portrays a system of production and consumption that requires the *continual* injection of *techniques and styles of persuasion*. Furthermore, because Sloanism differs from Fordism in the sense of giving a more central role to product/brand differentiation and stylistic/technical obsolescence, the configuration of political-economy requires us to broaden the spectrum of social agents that actively contribute to its maintenance, articulation (including its imagization) and 'deepening' in society. The broadening of social agents in this hegemonic formation likewise necessitates a closer inspection of the variant and contesting values and norms of these groups and individuals, and how these synthesize amongst the agencies and instructions of mass persuasion.

The aim of the chapter as such is to contribute to the neo-Gramscian oeuvre by theoretically re-situating the analysis of hegemony in the *relations of consumption*. I argue that Walter Benjamin's ideas emerging from *The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction* animate the period precisely because the very idea of the 'mass' of society *being able to consume to the products of culture and art* (one only possible in conditions of mass reproducibility) represents a qualitatively unique stage of history that open up the *possibility* of counter-hegemonic and subordinated social groups exercising political and cultural leverage against dominant elites. In other words, in contradistinction to the perspective of *The Mass Culture Industry*, processes of mass consumption and mass culture do not operate as a deceiving re-ification of the actual and lived inequalities wealth and power, but rather become a key site of contestation between different social groups who ascribe their own values and interests into a the broader hegemonic 'moment.'

Chapter 3 interrogates the transforming structures of class and class consciousness in the United States at the end of the 19th and early 20th centuries. The rapidly changing socio-economic and demographic nature of American society during this period suggests that Bernays' plea towards the ruling class in *Propaganda* was made precisely because of the presumed disorder of urban mass society as opposed to the *relatively* more stable Victorian conceptions of social order and hierarchy. These challenges 'from below' are reflected by a discursive and practical interest in the 'emergent' mass, and the lack of solidity of the *terms* used to comprehend them (varying from the 'middling sort,' to the 'public' to the 'people') demonstrate the *presumed mobility* inherent in the American social structure, one that I argue has a longer heritage in the United States than other countries, lending the processes of modernization a particular fungibility in terms of the way in which they were apprehended and understood by different social groups.

The central claim of Chapter 3 is that the embryonic years in which something recognizable as *either* a Fordist or Sloanist political-economic formation emerged witnessed a transformation of class structures and class consciousness. This change- a socio-economic as well as cultural one- questions the stability of 'norms' and 'values' of ruling elites, and therefore complicates the relatively clear pattern of 'hegemony' articulated in the neo-Gramscian work of Robert Cox and Mark Rupert. I argue that whilst they were not wrong in their depiction and critical analysis of labour-capital relationships, class alliances and national economic-policy making, more attention needs to be paid to the *aesthetic* contestations that emerge between and *within* social groups vying for a voice- sometimes directly political, in the case of the Progressives, sometimes purely 'moral' or 'cultural' in the case of the Modernists.

Chapter 4 follows directly by interrogating the tensions of American vernacular culture and art set against the *transnational* circulation of 19th century bourgeois artistic tastes and styles. It is the story of the gradual path from a pastoral society that acclaimed virtue and beauty from simple and efficient tools and the engineered constructions from those tools towards a society that celebrated a fusion of modernist and highly stylized cultural products. I highlight a longstanding tension between a moralistic discourse that prioritized the 'simple life,' on the one hand, and the explicit demonstration of wealth and 'worldliness' on the other. Within this nexus, I argue that the ideas of social mobility in the United States became increasingly measured by the fashions, mannerisms and tastes of social groups and individuals. The

contradictory *aesthetic* that underpins the iconologies of Sloanism and mass persuasion inherit these tensions, but in the early 20th century come to explicit blows as the academy-sanctioned criterion of aesthetic judgement was questioned and openly challenged by avant-garde modernists. The mass persuasion industries drew heavily from modernists, integrating their sleek forms and contemporary visualizations whilst appealing to the vernacular sensibilities of efficiency and simplicity. Charles Sheeler's photographic narrative of the River Rouge and Highland Plants are highlighted by Terry Smith as the ultimate culmination of this process; a photographer trained in the avant-garde bohemian neighbourhood of Greenwich Village imagizing the very forms of industrialization.

The central claim of Chapter 4 is that the development of the artistic styles and techniques that eventually contributed towards the mass persuasion industries- that provided the hegemony of American capitalism with a particular *aesthetic power*- is the culmination of tensions between a developing sense of American vernacular art and the transnationalized aesthetic developments within bourgeois culture. The 19th century was generally dominated by European-led developments in painting, literature and architecture that were hegemonic in the sense that they provided the criterion of good taste and set the parameters (common sense) of aesthetic judgement. These artistic preferences were held by the Custodian set, and were disseminated through society amongst aspirational lower classes through pamphlets, serializations and later public libraries and galleries, often organized, built and paid for in the preferred mode of dissemination of the Custodians: public philanthropy.

Yet this vision of art and culture faced tension in the developing vernacular arts of America- something which John Atlee Kouwenhoven argues occurred as a result of the westward expansion and settlement, where individuals and social groups learned a different kind of appreciation of beauty, one that prioritized and found virtue in simplicity and the products of engineering. Whilst considered austere and even ugly by the standards of the East Coast elites, this vernacular art contributed to the gradual mechanization of American society, providing the tools and design of proto-mass productions systems such as the American System of Manufactures. It is intimated that the 'Lockean' conditions of American nation-building facilitated a distance between the cultural authority of the Custodian elites whose preferences gazed towards Europe and the vernacular, 'folk arts' of civil society social groups and individuals. At the same time, these Lockean conditions also fostered commercialism and ideas of materialist aspiration that would also become hallmarks of the *aesthetic* of Sloanism.

Chapter 5 critically analyzes the rise of the mass persuasion industries, and the aesthetic styles they fostered to legitimate capitalist society in the United States. By counterpoising two advertising agents, and their respective clients- Ford and General Motors (Sloan), I hope to demonstrate the key differences in marketing strategies between Ford and Sloan, and to therefore substantiate the claim that Sloanism might be a more compelling framework to understand capitalist hegemony, in light of the broadening out of social agents involved in the process, and the perpetual challenges to the presumed norms and values of the elite. A presentation of a 'social tableau' of advertising a car manufacturer, taken from Duke Library collections, aims to demonstrate fully the aesthetics of Sloanism; the aspirational materialism, sense of social mobility and ideals of progress and abundance that underpin it. In the annex to chapter 5, a full case study of Edward Bernays, from the Library of Congress Archives, is presented in the hope of fully resolving the sets of arguments claimed in this thesis.

Conclusion: Three Contributions to the Neo-Gramscian Concept of Hegemony

This thesis will make three central contributions to the neo-Gramscian concept of hegemony.

Firstly, it will demonstrate the importance of *aesthetics* to hegemony. It aims to demonstrate that the processes involved in securing 'consent' in society requires a template to understand the *emotional* and *sentimental* ways in which this consensualization occurs. The aesthetic as a category focuses on 'non-rational' ways in which individuals understand their environment, and articulates the way in which those individuals apprehend beauty and sublimity from cultural and artistic products. The 'aesthetic' also holds particular relevance for hegemony as it acts as a form of both concealing and revealing contradictions and antagonisms in the relationships of power.[21] It can therefore act as a portal through which class relationships can be understood outside the materialist based theories of traditional Marxism. The aesthetic can further fulfill the concept of hegemony in the particular conditions of early 20th century America, in which massly reproducible cultural artefacts became widely available, and increasing *imagizations* of society began to prevail through a variety of media forms. As such, it can resolve unanswered questions of hegemony to do with the style and manner of the dissemination of 'norms' and 'values' that underpins a hegemonic formation. As a means of conveying ideas, assumptions and challenges in society, it can provide us with a greater sense of what phenomena such as mass consumption *mean* to people.

[21] Eagleton, Terry *The Ideology of the Aesthetic,* Oxford: Blackwell, 1990, pg. 9

Secondly, it will be shown how shifting the terrain of analysis from Fordism to Sloanism can better capture the *processes* of hegemony in early 20th century America. This is because Sloanism as both framework of analysis *and* practices of design and marketing holds aesthetic issues *centrally* rather than as *corollaries* to the fundamentals of the relationships of production. Brand differentiation, marketing strategies and hierarchization of styles all contained sentimental, emotional and sensual qualities that help us to understand the *power* of American culture and the 'consensus' it creates through the interaction of alternative and counter-hegemonic groups that are positioned outside the traditional Marxian framework of labour-capital relations. It brings to the forefront social agents and groups such as artists, designers and advertisers in contributing to the 'aesthetics' of hegemony. In this way, shifting the terrain to Sloanism offers an *aesthetic* template for understanding the process of hegemony, and the manner in which 'consent' is achieved in society. It shows *why* aesthetics is important precisely because the emotional and sentimental ways in which social groups and individuals apprehend their political-economic environment. Fordism, on the other hand, prioritized a materialist dimension to the process of mass production, rendering cultural change a 'function' of capitalist interests. Chapter 2 will argue that the perspective of Walter Benjamin in *The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction* and Raymond Williams' schema of cultural hegemony can be appropriated by the neo-Gramscian framework to assist in theoretically capturing the relationships, channels of dissemination, and values that constitute American hegemony.

The final contribution to the neo-Gramscian oeuvre is how the norms and values of different social groups intersect with each other to produce new cultural meanings that legitimate the rise of Sloanism. Arguing that discourses of upward social mobility co-exist and eventually triumph over ideas of class-based political organization, it will be shown that tracing the *aesthetic* contestation between different social groups provides a portal for neo-Gramscians to better interrogate the norms and values of social classes under conditions of rapid social transformation. This aesthetic understanding is more sensitive to the aspirations of subordinate, non-elite groups, rather than thinking about those aspirations being engineered 'from above.' Given that American 'soft' power is often articulated in cultural terms, an analysis of the influence of these practices should be central to a neo-Gramscian evaluation of American hegemony. Once again, shifting the terrain towards *Sloanism* provides a more dynamic grasp of how styles and cultural ideas gave rise to a mass production-mass

consumption society. Tracing the development of an American vernacular culture and the tensions with bourgeois criterion of art and culture helps us to understand the 'power' and 'appeal' of the American way of life because it is sensitive to both the direct, efficient aesthetic of vernacular culture as well as the stylish, modernist cultures of the early 20th century. In this way, we can understand the system of mass production not just as a culmination of scientific progress, but also as a 'cultural' artefact in its own right. The power derived from this, aided by the imagization of early 20th century from modernist techniques provides the neo-Gramscian framework with a means of exploring the 'aesthetics' of hegemony through the templates provided by art and culture. As such it provides a more dynamic way of thinking about class and class consciousness, aspects that are intimated by neo-Gramscians, but not realizable with the current tools of social science. It suggests that the *terrain* of political struggle can be fought over in domains outside the visible political realm.

Chapter 1: Review of Literature

1.1 Introduction

Having established in the introductory chapter the problematique and key set of arguments of the thesis, this review of literature will survey the important schools of thought and works relevant to 'The Aesthetics of Hegemony,' in the United States.

To begin with, the Frankfurt School perspectives on mass culture and society will be evaluated in terms of their ability to explain the *power* of capitalism over individuals and social classes. The work of Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer are regarded as key interventions in the Marxist canon of literature over issues of culture. By theorizing a role for the industries of mass culture, the Frankfurt School present a depiction of a totalizing form of capitalist society in which potentialities for resistance and emancipatory change continually diminish. The growth of mass culture contributed to this by diverting attention away from the drudgery and exploitation of daily existence. This eventuates in an anaestheticization of the masses as they become ever more content with participating in a daily life of consuming the products of mass culture.

It will be argued that although the work of Frankfurt School represents a rich contribution to understanding the relationships between aesthetics, culture and political economy, there exist a number of deficiencies for understanding the power of American hegemony. Firstly, the philosophical focus of the school prevents an engagement with the relationships *between* social groups and classes. Indeed, the powerful portrayal of the totalizing, inescapable nature of the mass culture industry fails to address the values, norms or interests of different social classes or how they might change over time. As such it does not address the re-shaping of class relationships and the interaction of those relationships as a mass production-mass consumption was coming into being. Secondly, the Frankfurt School demonstrate a compulsive interest in differentiating 'authentic' art from 'kitsch' art. This is something shared with a number of conservative commentators in the United States at the time like

Dwight MacDonald. The Frankfurt School interrogate this differentiation as a means of showcasing the *falsity* of consciousness under conditions of the mass culture industry. As such it seems unable to grasp *why* or *how* individuals or particular social groups might actually draw *emancipatory* cultural and socio-political meanings from mass culture. Gramsci himself wrote, 'one must speak of a struggle for a new culture , that is , for a new moral life that cannot but be intimately connected to a new intuition of life , until it becomes a new way of feeling and seeing reality.'[22]This demonstrates how he thought art and culture could play a role in transforming politics, one which is payed slight attention to in neo-Gramscian writing on the early Fordist period. It curtails the role of subordinate or counter-hegemonic groups in contributing to the formation of hegemony. I argue in Chapter 2 that this deficiency is successfully addressed by Walter Benjamin, Raymond Williams and David Gartman.

The issue of ascribing characteristics and values to social classes is also something that resides in the neo-Gramscian framework. The assumed stability of class consciousness appears only to be transformable through pressure from classes positioned higher in the political-economic order. The *political-economic* interested of the higher, dominant or ruling elites also remain relatively constant. As such, the full spectrum of social classes and individuals involved in the processes of hegemony is narrowed down to those participating directly in the capital-labour-state relationships. It will be argued that by considering the 'aesthetics' of hegemony anchored in *Sloanism*, social agents from the world of artistic and cultural production have a more prominent role in the process of hegemony. Furthermore, those that have control and influence over medias of dissemination such as newspaper editors and public relations consultants also become vital social agents in analysing the transformation and dissemination of norms and values in society. It will be argued that the *lack* of sensitivity to issues around art, culture and the mediums of representation constrain the theoretical framework in terms of explaining the 'spontaneous' moment of consent in hegemony.

[22] Forgacs, David (ed.) *The Gramsci Reader: Selected Writings, 1916-1935*, New York: New York Publishers, 2000, pg. 395

The issue of class and class consciousness, central to the neo-Gramscian analysis of hegemony encounters a further problem in the historical conditions of early 20th century America. 'Class' as conceived of in the Marxian sense relates to the position of groups and individuals in the hierarchical relations of production. Neo-Gramscians appropriate this category, albeit in a more fluid sense, to analyse the relationships that secured a consensus in the relations of *mass production*, and then at a state and inter-state level, for *Fordist* society. Yet these categorizations of class and class consciousness remained anchored in the *European* experience of industrialization and capitalism in the mid-19th century. As such, literature regarding the nature of class and class consciousness in the *United States* will be explored to locate key differences in the experience of working classes and middle classes.

A long standing question over *why no nationally organized working class movement meaningfully challenged the political system during the Great Depression* is a counterfactual starting point to the analyses of working classes in the United States by Mike Davis. Davis' account in *Prisoners of the American Dream* is a convincing narrative of why and how opportunities for working class politics making an enduring impact were missed. Through this, the issue of class consciousness in the United States is analysed, with a number of 'exceptional' characteristics for working and middle classes developing in the United States. However, Davis remains anchored in a categorization of class renderable to the European experience, and as such there are issues of culture and aesthetics that remain unexplored. C. Wright Mills evaluates the role of 'white collar' workers and the types of norms and values emerging from their historic emergence. This goes some way to explaining the particular dynamism of class consciousness in the United States, centred around ideas of upward social mobility, rather than consolidated political action to improve conditions of life. Mills also highlights the growing importance of the white collar classes in terms of a political-economic constituency that politicians and corporations sought to influence and capture attention. Mills also points towards thinking about different channels through which this might happen, particularly the new forms of media emerging in early 20th century.

The final area of the review of literature evaluates the authors of work that addressed the relationship between these medias and the 'mass society.' Both Edward Bernays and Walter Lippmann are important figures in this. Bernays and Lippmann worked in the Committee for Public Information (CPI) during the First World War. This government sponsored bureau was responsible for the production and dissemination of domestic 'propaganda' to support the

entry of the United States into the First World War. The first national-scale organization of its kind, the CPI mobilised an array of available media including newspapers, cinema and radio, as well as poster art to create images that demonised the German enemy *and* portrayed the American nation and a liberator and bringer of freedom. As such, Bernays and Lippmann had first hand experience of *creating* propaganda for the 'masses,' and drew lessons from the positive reaction of a large sector of the population.

Bernays and Lippmann authored works that both outlined the dangers *and* positive potentialities for 'propaganda,' and 'public relations,' in terms of influencing the public. Bernays was also a *practioner* of public relations during peacetime, working with a range of companies and governmental agencies and initiating some of the core techniques of public relations. These included mobilising artists, newspaper editors, celebrities, photographers, scientists to create an interest in certain products or characters. Chapter 5 will present a case study of Bernays' work, drawn from the Library of Congress Archives. For this chapter, what is important is how Bernays and Lippmann are sensitive to the role of culture and media, and how it influenced people's ideas of society. They also understood how powerful a mass persuasion complex anchored in industries such as public relations and advertising could be for the maintenance and stability of political-economic elites. It was the ability to both withhold information and create influential discourses and 'montages' of a way of life where this power lay.

Finally of importance is that both understood and recognized the power of sentiment, emotion and sensuality in the dissemination of public information. Whilst Bernays delves into the psychological and scientific foundations of the public relations, there is less attention to the role of art and culture- precisely those domains involved in the stimulation of the sentimental, emotional and sensual thoughts. In short, Bernays and Lippmann intimate *aesthetic* processes involved in the maintenance of power (through mass persuasion), but tend to be dismissive of what cultural and political meanings might be apprehended in the process, by the very masses they seek to influence.

To begin with though, the key neo-Gramscian scholarship on Fordism and hegemony will be reviewed in order to establish the gaps in the lacanae that can be attended to by a focus on aesthetics, and the agencies of mass persuasion that lend hegemony such as distinct form in early 20th century America.

1.2 The Neo-Gramscian Offensive

"*A concept of control represents a bid for hegemony: a project for the conduct of public affairs and social control that aspires to be a legitimate approximation of the general interest in the eyes of the ruling class, and at the same, the majority of the population, for at least a specific period. It evolves through a series of compromises in which the fractional, special interests are arbitrated and synthesized*."[23]

This section aims to establish the key theoretical and conceptual framework of the neo-Gramscian school of International Political Economy, and to initiate both a critique of and contribution to the oeuvre. Essential concepts such as hegemony and control, derived primarily from the intuitive and original writings of Antonio Gramsci, have been enriched through a sustained intellectual engagement with international political-economic transformation, and have sought primarily to engage these transformations in terms of the changing parameters of class contestation and conflict that underpin the character and practice of power in International Relations.

In the work of Robert Cox, Stephen Gill, Kees Van der Pijl, Mark Rupert and William Robinson, two prominent anchors of epistemological concern emerge: i) the processes of class formation and alliance-forging at both national and international levels are privileged in terms of how hegemony at a transnational level is exercised as capitalist social relations matures during the course of the twentieth century and ii) the norms and values of leading political-economic classes are scrutinized and evaluated in terms of the *consensualizing* processes of hegemonic power; that is to say, the manner in which the ideals, ideologies and idiosyncrasies of the dominant classes are articulated and disseminated as general interests. As demonstrated in the opening quotation, however, the 'legitimate approximation of the general interest,' can only be achieved through a series of compromises over competing and sometimes antagonistic 'special interests,' for which the neo-Gramscians filter through the prism of *class* interests. The transformatory processes of international political economy are therefore conditioned by a perpetual confrontation between the leading political-economic classes and other exploited, marginalised or absorbed social classes, presumably providing the dynamic for re-shaping power relations.

[23] Van der Pijl, Kess, *The Making of an Atlantic Ruling Class*, London: Verso, 1984, pg. 7

As such, neo-Gramscian scholarship has synthesized an insightful and critical narrative of the trajectory of 20th century global political-economic transformation, underpinned by the concepts of hegemony and control. Broadly, this narrative is one that locates the exercise of international or global political-economic power *within* a detached and transnationalized constellation of agents and institutions and *around* the dominant ideational trends that have accompanied the rise and wane of a variety of these constellations; a '*nébuleuse*' sufficiently powerful enough to drive key structural changes in the global economy, yet distantly positioned enough to circumvent direct accountability, existing instead as an almost ethereal matrix of absentees 'that tries to generate a consensus for the management of global capitalism.'[24]. This idea of generating 'consensus' involves a careful mediation of interests, firstly in an intra-elite contestation over the style, technique and content of any managerial offensive, and secondly a cross-class arbitration that whilst fundamentally *international* in nature (*a priori* from a neo-Gramscian perspective given the epistemological privileging of a transnational capitalist class), undertakes its manifest resolution within national and regional socio-political formations. Centrally bound and organised around the Gramscian notions of hegemony and control, and critically grounded in a historical account of the internationalisation, or transnationalization of capitalist political-economic power and class formation, there are nonetheless significant variances between the key neo-Gramscian scholars regarding the manner in which 'consensus' is generated and disseminated, implicated as it is inescapably in the apparently discernible norms and values of society, economy, politics and culture.

The work of Robert Cox and Mark Rupert has focused on the engineering of a productivity-orientated consensus that came to dominate the international political economic order during the Bretton Woods era, underpinned by both the techniques of mass production *and* the compromised social relations of mass production that were negotiated in the United States in the two decades prior to her assumption of hegemonic, global political-economic leadership after the end of the Second World War. Rupert argues that the era of 'embedded liberalism,' is fundamentally characterised by a historical accommodation of labour in advanced Western capitalist countries in a broader arc of capitalist ideology.[25] Distinct to this era, lasting roughly from 1945 until 1973, was a practical and discursive phase of capitalist entrenchment

[24] Cox, Robert with Schechter, Michael, *The Political Economy of Plural World: Critical Reflections on Power, Morals and Civilization*, Abingdon: Routledge, 2002, pg. ix

[25] Rupert, Mark *Producing Hegemony: The Politics of Mass Production and American Global Power*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995, pg. 24

that simultaneously prioritised international trade, capital accumulation (within the national sphere), and social prosperity through both increased access to a range of welfare provisions as well as the enablement of working class access to mass produced goods.[26] The significance of this, retrospectively claimed, was the securing of the ideals of social justice, mobility and welfare within a Keynesian economic management framework. By integrating the demands of a potentially restive Western European working class into a 'broader arc of capitalist ideology,' capitalism, *per se*, and capitalist social relations were re-shaped and re-articulated as *nationally*-based and co-ordinated projects of socio-economic development, initiating a more secure bond between the leading political-economic classes and national civil society.[27]

The Bretton Woods agreements and the Marshall Plan together make up the foundational architecture of international political economic order that made this period of embedded liberalism possible; of particular note, aside from labour's accommodation into the structures of national governance, the ability of Western governments to retain a measure of control and leverage over the international circulation of capital is regarded as a crucial feature of this order, and an aspect that was legitimated and guaranteed (until Nixon's decision to withdraw from Bretton Woods) by what Van der Pijl deems to be an 'Atlantic Ruling Class.' By curtailing (but by no means eliminating) the potentiality of national economic destabilisation by the movement of speculative and unstable finance capital, and allowing significant levels of government intervention in the economy and economic planning, the Bretton Woods era of embedded liberalism showcased on the one hand a concessionary approach to arbitrating cross-class interests; successfully (at least at a discursive and aesthetic level) integrating 'forms of social democracy that are in keeping with the goals of social justice, equality and human dignity that lay at the heart of socialist, social-democratic, and other worker-based political movements.'[28] On the other hand, it can be reflected that this was also a period of 'deepening' the entrenchment of capitalist social relationships and inculcating socio-economic norms and values around both the productivity-orientated consensus of Fordism as well as emergent patterns of mass consumption.

[26] Cox, Robert *Power, Production and World Order: Social Forces in the Making of History*, New York: Columbia University Press, 1987

[27] Van der Pijl, Kees *Transnational Classes and International Relations*, London: Routledge, 1998, pg. 68

[28] Cox, Robert with Sinclair, Timothy *Approaches to World Order*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996, pg.

In either case, the importance of this period lays in the internationally co-ordinated management of the Bretton Woods system, which brought forth new institutions such as the International Monetary Fund and World Bank, and encouraged the creation of transnational consultation bodies in the form of the G7 and OECD. In its primary policy-making and execution strategies, both Robert Cox and Kees Van der Pijl demonstrate that such leading agencies and institutions of this era were composed of people drawn from similar ideological and class backgrounds, holding shared values and norms about the management of the international economy, and versed in the themes of managerialism, productive efficiency and capital accumulation. As Van der Pijl states in the introduction to *The Making of an Atlantic Ruling Class*:

"*In this era, the specific form and content of the internationalization of capital allowed the bourgeoisie in the North Atlantic area to regroup and develop a series of* ***comprehensive concepts of control*** *by which it could reinforce its* ***hegemonial*** *position both nationally, and in confrontation with extra-Atlantic challenges, internationally*."[29]

As such, Van der Pijl's specific interpretation and contribution is to implicate Atlantic class-formation processes as the foundation of capitalist hegemony during the BWS, a process that ultimately reaches back into the 19th century with increased co-ordination of class interests over the circulation of money capital in the North Atlantic, and one where New York eventually displaced London as the 'epicentre' of an *anticipated* internationalization of that circulation[30] during the First World War. Although 'nationally productive capital' would then sideline international finance capital during the turbulent years of the Great Depression and the Second World War, the Atlantic circuit was reconstituted following the end of the Second World War and is considered by neo-Gramscians to be a prerequisitional structural change in the international political economy that underpinned the *Pax Americana*. Characterised by the ever-increasing advance of American multinational firms and banks, and organised under the aegis of i) Taylorist principles of Scientific Management, ii) Fordist methods of mass production[31] and iii) Sloanist techniques of planned obsolescence[32], traditional or mainstream

[29] Van der Pijl, Kees *The Making of an Atlantic Ruling Class*,London:Verso, 1984, pg. 1
[30] Ibid.
[31] Rupert, Mark *Producing Hegemony: The Politics of Mass Production and American Global Power* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995, pg. 72

[32] Gartman, David *Auto Opium: A Social History of Automobile Design*, (London: Routledge, 1994)
Gartman poignantly argues that whilst Ford is often credited with initiating the mass production economy, mass *consumption* as a perpetual feature of society may not have been possible without Alfred Sloan. As the head of Ford's great rival, General Motors, Sloan was induced to create more innovative methods to remain

International Relations analysis has cast this era as one of United States hegemony *within* the overarching, bipolar structural condition of the Cold War. Whilst the United States undoubtedly remained the paramount capitalist power during this era, the neo-Gramscian focus on the contentious strategies of international class formation stress that a critical political-economic approach to understanding *hegemony* should remain epistemologically and historically grounded in the way in which these class formations generate and re-shape structural conditions of the international political economy, or as Stephen Gill writes, 'social interaction and political change takes place within what can be called the *limits of the possible*, limits which, however, are not fixed and immutable but exist within the dialectics of a given social structure.'[33] As such, we might consider the international system of nation-states to be just one kind of social structure, which has become re-ified as fixed and immutable, and one which leads to analyses of power as rooted within that closed epistemological system. The neo-Gramscians, like other schools of Marxist thought (notably the 'World-Systems' school), have attempted to transcend this by locating power in *class* and the unequal, internationalised social relationships that have developed during the maturation and profusion of capitalism.

The 'neo-Gramscian' offensive began in earnest during the waning of the bipolar system, and during a period where neo-liberal economic policy-making had already become predominant in the North Atlantic arena and the major international economic institutions. Entering a broader series of discourses in International Relations about the 'globalization' of the world economy, and at pains to re-assert the historical materialist critique of political economy, neo-Gramscians were problematizing, explaining and criticizing features of the international political economy from a standpoint of the *post*-BWS political economic order. Further galvanised by the ascendance of International Political Economy and Development Studies as sub-genres of IR, critical IPE sought to re-historicise the artificial dichotomisation of Politics and Economics, States and Markets, Core and Periphery in order to exfoliate the surface-level interpretations of the dominant Realist and Liberalist interpretations of World Order and reach for critical depth in analysis and interpretation, and as such bring about a more

competitive. 'Planned obsolescence,' the idea of integrating in-built material disintegration and stylistic obsolescence into the design of mass produced commodtites , invigorated the marketing and advertising ideals of the 1920s in the United States, creating a culture of perpetual consumption; driven by both the necessity of upgrading products and perceived desire for better style.

[33] Gill, Stephen 'Epistemology, Ontology and the Italian School,' in Stephen Gill (ed.) *Gramsci, Historical Materialism and International Relations* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993

historically coherent critique about the deployment of *power* at an international level. Cox's *Production, Power and World Order*, regarded as an exemplar of the neo-Gramscian canon, mobilises the concept of *production* to primarily construct a heuristic theoretical and conceptual framework for the study of IPE, approaching the 'understanding of current historical change from the standpoint of a reciprocal relationship between power and production.'[34]

Moreover the analysis is set in motion *during* the process of political-economic structural reconfiguration during the crisis of the 1970s following the collapse of the BWS. In a typical Marxian way, Cox states that:

"*The world economic crisis appears as a threshold- a phase of transition between the definable structures of the recent past and the as yet unclear structures of the emerging future...made by the human material of history, shaped as it is by its own past. It is fitting, then, to end with a look at this human material in its collective aspect-* ***at class formation and the prospects of politicization of class toward the formation of new state structures***."[35]

The privileging of class as a central organisational category, Cox admits, may well be outdated and appears to have been outmoded 'ever since productive forces have been able to produce abundance and that the real social issues now turn upon arousing consciousness directed toward psychic emancipation.'[36] In order to re-invigorate *class*, and for it as a category of social scientific analysis to remain relevant in a capitalist world quite unrecognisable from the one which gave rise to the concept in the first place, Cox believes that a return to *production* is necessary, or as he puts it 'starting at the beginning with production so as to consider how the diversity of ways in which production is carried on and the variety of social relationships generated in production processes condition the social forces that can become the bases of power in state and world order.'[37] In sum, Cox believes that 'the structure of production in a particular society gives the basis for its class structure,' but that the *organization* of production only 'creates the *potential* for class,' and that 'whether or not classes in fact emerge depends on factors affecting *consciousness*.'[38] It therefore leaves room for re-interpreting the notion of *class*, dependent on that variety of material and ideational forces existent within any given political-economic configuration, and as Chapter 2 will demonstrate, this is precisely what is needed to draw out the specificity and

[34] Cox, Robert with Sinclair, Timothy *Approaches to World Order*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996, pg. 1
[35] Ibid, pg. 2
[36] Ibid, pg. 3
[37] Ibid, pg. 4
[38] Ibid, pg. 6

uniqueness of the American experience during the genesis of the Fordist political economy between 1900 and 1930; a period characterised by historically distinct class consciousness, the rise of the white collar workforce and the proliferation of new media and artistic techniques that galvanised an aesthetic of aspirational bourgeois materialism.

Likewise, Van der Pijl introduces the concept of class as denoting the 'aspect of agency producing and reproducing the structures of a society based on exploitation...by embodying the structural inequalities of the social order, classes constitute the living reality of these structures.'[39] Both these visions of class as such elevate the category as the fundamental and lived reality of social divisions, and within a traditional Marxian base-superstructure framework allude to the *ultimate* structuring of class relationships by a seemingly pre-ordained force: humanity's relationship with nature, its appropriative 'metabolism,' and the historical way in which humans have created the capacity to create wealth out of this relationship. Under the discipline of capital, and following the politico-legal and cultural embedding of the social relations between the owners of property and those without, 'exploiters across all historical experience have sought to consolidate their privileged access to society's wealth by *symbolic* and material means of power.'[40] Both Cox and Van der Pijl, whilst stressing the importance of civil society movements, educational structures and behavioural socialisation in hierarchically organised public and private corporations, also appear to delineate relatively stable 'fractions' of class, and accordingly derive the norms and values that are held by the leading political-economic elites as rooted in the culture of capital accumulation.

Van der Pijl in particular stresses the importance of the discipline of capital, its historical emergence and its imposition upon society as an apparently autonomous force which it owes to the twin processes of 'commodification and alienation, the breaking of community bonds.'[41] As a force that atomises community life into an alienating life-world of individual economic subjects forced to sell their labour in open competition, it is from the outset beset with the problem of resistance, which Van der Pijl claims can occur on three 'terrains': i) in *original accumulation,* the process in which the commodity form is imposed on social and productive relations and capital turns into a autonomous social force, ii) the *production*

[39]Van der Pijl, Kees *Transnational Classes and International Relations* (London: Routledge, 1998), pg.31
[40] Ibid
[41] Ibid, pg. 36

process, whereby the ever greater quest for exploiting labour leads to the gradual subordination of 'human autonomy and creativity' by expanding value, and iii) the process of *social reproduction* which is subjected to the requirements of capital accumulation.[42] Despite the opportunity for oppressed social agents to engage in these terrains of resistance, it appears that there is an *a priori* structure in which this is possible, that being of the discipline of capital. Van der Pijl clarifies this, whereby the *discipline of capital* 'means that behind the veil of commodity relations, the technical labour process is subordinated to the process of *value expansion* of valorisation.'[43] Furthermore, because this process is reliant on human labour power as a 'material input of the process of capitalist production and accumulation,' this 'contradictory unity requires a constant reimposition of the capitalist discipline on the human reality, comparable to stamping the commodity from on the product as such.'[44] This disciplining historically and concretely occurs through the guise of *industrial* capital, and tends to be articulated at a moment of 'national concentration' of industry and labour, whereby both the proletariat and the capitalist classes become 'susceptible to corporatism,'; that is, the point in which the *state* becomes involved in the maintenance and reproduction of capitalist social relations, or 'to sustain the structures of socialisation growing up around this generation of industry.'[45]

In the same way in which Van der Pijl articulates hegemony as a process by which specific class interests become articulated and legitimised as 'general interest,' Cox, when speaking of 'factors that affect consciousness,' intimates at aspects of society and social relations which produce particular typologies of class consciousness, whereby elite interests are consensualized through non-violent means of control. As an *intimation*, rather than a causal explanation, there ought to be sufficient theoretical space to allow the category of class to be de-linked from the production of consciousness and subjectivities of late capitalism. This is important for neo-Gramscian IPE, as it places Gramsci's own vision of hegemony to superlative importance. Cox speaks of hegemony as 'meaning more than the dominance of a single world power...it means dominance of a particular kind where the dominant state creates an order based on ideologically on a broad measure of consent, functioning according to general principles that in fact ensure the continuing supremacy of the leading state or states and leading social classes but at the same time offer some measure or prospect of satisfaction

[42] Ibid
[43] Ibid, pg. 39
[44] Ibid
[45] Ibid, pg. 43

to the less powerful.'[46] The *problematique* emerging from this particular idea of hegemony is therefore a delicate and potentially subversive process of *control*, whereby the 'supremacy' of political-economic elites is reproduced whilst simultaneously ensuring the acquiescence of subordinate classes, and thereby staving off the supposed inevitably of social uprising or revolution that might dismantle the apparatus of power of those dominant political-economic elites. However, it also requires a closer inspection of the fractioning of 'class' and the moment of control itself.

"*Concepts of control are frameworks of thought and practice by which a particular world view of the ruling class spills over into a broader sense of 'limits of possible' for society at large. Adding the dimension of (international) politics and (transnational) class struggle to... [the] 'mode of regulation', a concept of control strategically articulates the special historical interests of a historically concrete configuration of classes and states with the management requirements of the order with which those interests are most immediately congruent.*"[47]

The above quotation regarding the concept of control, one of the most coherent and encompassing of the neo-Gramscian genre, showcases that the 'spilling over' of 'frameworks of thought and practice' is the 'moment' in which the neo-Gramscian concept of control solidifies into a broader process of consensualization, gradually filtering *downward* through hierarchically structured class society and *across* the terrain of a transnationalized capitalist world. It is at this 'moment' that the central contention of the thesis asserts itself; that the 'concept of control' does not *necessarily* require a co-ordinated, strategic articulation, nor that the 'concrete' configuration of classes and states are even necessarily fully aware of their own configuration. As will be demonstrated in the following chapter regarding the configuring of classes and class consciousness, in the United States during the early 20th century, the era in which both Fordism crystallised as a distinct political-economy *and* witnessed the rise of the an American mass *culture*, class alliances and formation, as considered from the experience of Western Europe, remains an elusive one, with seemingly 'unnatural' alliances between leading capitalist businesses, younger advertising and public relations professionals, and avant-garde artists producing a particular and historically American aesthetic of *capitalist realism*.[48] The importance of this is that whilst it can be claimed that there were indeed general interests that could be strategically co-ordinated

[46]Cox, Robert *Power, Production and World Order: Social Forces in the Making of History*, New York: Columbia University Press, 1987, pg. 7

[47] Van der Pijl, Kees *Transnational Classes and International Relations*, London: Routledge, 1998 pg. 51

[48]Schudson, Michael *Advertising, the Uneasy Persuasion: Its Dubious Impact on American Society* Basic Books, 1984, pg.212

between business and advertising, the role of artists and cultural producers remains problematic for neo-Gramscian theorisation, because it was their *techniques* and *styles* that were responsible for the galvanising a culture of mass consumption. Yet in their own words, they positioned themselves *outside* the capitalist political-economic and in some cases even made manifestos against the encroaching marketization of social and cultural life.[49] Their concerns appear as neither one embedded in the pecuniary ethics of early 20th century American capitalism, nor any particular sympathy for the plight of the disenfranchised and marginalised classes (as opposed to more vocal reform movements). Rather, artists influenced by Western European modernist and avant-garde art were seeking to grasp, through their work, the potentialities and antagonisms that they perceived in the rapidly modernising and urbanising processes as they unfolded in early 20th century America. A typical example would be Charles Sheeler, a pioneering American photographer and academically trained painter who was personally associated with the New York Dadaists. Regarded as one of the key figures in imagizing 'Machine Age America,' Sheeler was employed by Henry Ford to undertake mural photography and paintings of the new River Rouge plant, and his paintings *American Landscape* and *Classic Landscape* in 1930 and 1931 are considered to be paradigms of the meeting between art and industry. [50] Yet this 'moment' symbolises much more than the visualisation of a grandiloquent industrial project; in his dealings with both Ford and the creative agency that employed him in the first place, it tellingly provides an insight into the troubled encounter between different social groups, and the synthesizing of their respective visions of society in the nascent phase of the Fordist era. Smith argues that in this particular case, it showcases an encounter of a large company 'revolutionary in its productive and organisational forms, yet conservative in cultural matter and ambivalent about the demands of public image and consumerism,' with a 'tiny band of New York avant-garde artists.'[51] This example is just of many that led to a perpetual and symbiotic relationship, a patronage of the arts and culture by ruthless capitalist corporations who had been the object of the artists scorn and a wilful manifestation of the very atomising processes of society that the avant-garde had made pretences to incubate themselves from.

[49]Cowley, Malcolm *Exile's Return: A Literary Odyssey of the 1920s* London: Penguin Books, 1994, pg. 2. Cowley was a distinguished literary critic and regarded as a senior 'man of letters' amongst a generation of American artists and return who have been called the 'lost generation,' those artists who chose to relocate or spend time in Europe and brought back with them the key avant-garde trends in literature, painting, photography and the plastic arts.

[50] Smith, Terry *Making the Modern: Industry, Art and Design in America* Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993, pg. 110

[51] Ibid. Ford was famously reticent about advertising and the Ford Company did not hire an advertising agency until the 1922.

By means of intuitive and illustrative reflection, we may therefore contemplate, for example, what mechanisms of control made it possible for leading political-economic elites in the United States to maintain their positions of domestic hegemony during the crisis of the Great Depression of the 1930s *and* circumvent almost any meaningful challenges to those positions of power, despite the presence of a restive and numerically large industrial proletariat? The contention of this thesis is that a configuration of emergent, or nascent social classes, located in relatively new industries of the commercial arts, and new media forms in radio, advertising, cinema and photography, with varying degrees of 'concrete' class consciousness contributed to *aestheticiszng* the 'control' of capitalist political-economy. Furthermore, their ideas, some of which were contradictory and antagonistic with those value and norms held by leading political-economic elites, were in some way integrated, absorbed and re-shaped the articulative processes of hegemonic control, bringing forth what Terry Smith calls an '*iconology of American capitalism.*'[52]

1.3 Hegemony, Culture and the Frankfurt School

The Frankfurt School, and particularly *The Culture Industry* thesis of Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer, remain in the social sciences one of the key critical interventions in understanding the relationship between culture and political economy. As a narrative, it unravels a corrosive tale of the relentless instrumentalization and commodification of all areas of social and cultural life. This frightening depiction of an ever-encroaching totality of administered capitalism is encased in a critique of the development of mass culture in the early to mid 20th century; how it suffocates the potentialities for emancipatory transformation, and perhaps most relevantly, how social agents become increasingly incapable of realizing the atomized, re-ified reality they encounter. Themes of instant gratification, mass persuasion and mass reproducibility of lowbrow culture are all addressed, and leaves one with the sense that power from the top, and its deceptive capabilities (those intimated by Bernays) have scaled such heights, that the final domain of personal freedom- leisure- is itself now subjected to the same principles and norms of exchange value. As such, the *Culture Industry* addresses the question of hegemony indirectly, speaking to the way in which societies and social groups become saturated with dominant norms and values, and how the colonization of their free time and space by a mass culture industry lays bare the inescapable condition of working

[52] Ibid, pg. 19

classes in advanced capitalist societies that have undergone a transition to the bureaucratic, corporate kind that is typified by the managerial revolution, the rise of Taylorism and ideas of efficiency and rationality and a debilitated sense of progress.

"*The culture industry, which involves the production of works for reproduction and mass consumption, thereby organising 'free' time, the remnant domain of freedom under capital in accordance with the same principles of exchange and equivalence that reign in the sphere of production outside leisure, presents culture as the realization of the right of all to the gratification of desire while in reality continuing the negative integration of society.*"[53]

In essence, Adorno's central argument in *The Culture Industry* implies a correlation between the achievements of effective integration under Fascism *and* liberal democratic states; the culture industry's triumph of repressive unification did for liberals what was achieved through direct political control under Fascism. In addition, there is a clear theoretical connection with *The Dialectic of Enlightenment*- i.e., the very same rationality which provides for humankind's emancipation from the bondage of mythic powers and allows for progressive domination over nature, engenders, through its intrinsic character, a return to myth and even more absolute forms of domination. The feature of Enlightened reason which accounts for this reversal is its identification of rationality/understanding with the subsumption of the particular under the universal. Amongst the socio-ideational consequences of this, Adorno (and Horkheimer) prioritise 'instrumental' reason as disregarding the intrinsic properties of *things*- the properties that give each thing its sensuous, social and historical particularity, for the sake of the goals and purposes of the subject (c.f., Bernays). Unequal things become treated as equals (through commodity equivalence) and objects are subsumed under the unreflective drives of the subject. The purpose of this subsumption is to allow for conceptual and technical mastery. When instrumental reason becomes considered to be the *whole* of reason, then the possibility of cognising the particular in its own right becomes occluded- and without this possibility, the *reason which was to be the means to satisfying human ends becomes its own end, thereby turning against the true aims of the enlightenment: freedom and happiness*.[54]

Accordingly, Adorno argues that the culture industry as an effective phenomena in capitalist society depends on removing the thought that there is any alternative to the status quo; pleasure being the flight from the last remaining thought of resistance; the liberation

[53]Adorno, Theodor W. *The Culture Industry: Selected Essays on Mass Culture* London: Routledge, 2001, pg. 4
[54] Ibid.

promised by amusement is 'freedom from thought and negation':[55] '*The culture industry is the societal realisation of the defeat of reflection, the realisation of subsumptive reason, the unification of the many under the one.'*

The 'schema of mass culture' refers to the culture industry's own schematizing, or pre-forming of experience; particularly with regard to the collapse of the difference between culture and practical life, Adorno argues that this is the false aestheticization of the empirical world, 'and aestheticization of empirical life that does not transform it in accordance with the ideals of sensuous happiness and freedom but rather *secures the illusion that empirical life realises those ends ..* '[56]

In the course of a content analysis regarding an Astrology column of the LA times, in an essay *The Stars Down to Earth*, Adorno demonstrates that the claims of the culture industry, while representing an increasingly more integrated and oppressive scheme of capitalist totality, still requires the cognizance and interpretation of individual and group agency for its affects to be understood and manifested as coherent, rationalised behaviour. For example, the mere fact that the vast majority of people in the advanced capitalist world watch television or Hollywood movies is not a direct indictment that agents have completely lost the capacity for reflection- i.e., it is possible to see through the manipulation at work and sustain a critical distance from it. What Adorno argues is that complete subservience and deception is not necessary for the culture industry to succeed- '*the triumph of advertising in the culture industry is that consumers feel compelled to buy and use its products even though they see through them.*'[57]

The surface rationality of the common sense advice offered by the column correspond to a premise that is located within the thesis of the *Dialectic of Enlightenment*- that where rational self-interest (an axiom *a priori* of the Enlightenment) as normally understood is pushed to extremes so as to become *ir*rational- the historical fate of reason. The success of the astrology column- what Adorno calls 'secondary occultism'- is based on readers receiving and interpreting information that is provided through the medium of a largely institutionalised, objectified and socialised form of the everyday life- the newspaper (which in itself bears the

[55] Ibid.
[56] Ibid.
[57] Ibid.

responsibility for engaging society with *truth-content* of their organisation, governance and direction).[58] In part, it is its distance from seriousness that allows the reader of the column to trade in 'common-sense' without neither sacrificing the claims of rational evidence and reflection (hence keeping natural science in its sacrosanct place), nor demanding anything approaching religiosity. Hence, astrology's survival into the culture industry is premised on its alienation from experience, playing on people's scepticism and disbelief, conversely engendering belief and obedience amongst certain people.

David Gartman argues that the driving principles of mass culture that Adorno identifies derive from the 'demand for compensation by the working classes, originating in the alienating conditions of labour.' In other words, the de-humanizing conditions of *production* that accompany the path to mass production and standardization are compensated by the *mass consumption of culture* as a 'form of exercising a freedom and sociality denied in the act of capitalist production.'[59] Gartman's argument resonates here with Benjamin's idea that the mass reproducibility of artworks and cultural artefacts provide subordinated social groups and classes with the *idea* of a freedom (to consume art and culture) that had been historically denied and out of reach. I will argue in Chapter 2 that Benjamin also intimates that this newly realized freedom can likewise produce new forms of political consciousness that *may not necessarily* be revealed in organized political action (for example, Lukacs' insistence that transforming the production of art in accordance with realist principles would afford a new role of cultural producers *within* the structure of a Communist party).

Nevertheless, Adorno asserts that the culture industry *intentionally* seeks to integrate its consumers from above, fusing the 'old' and the 'familiar' into a *new* quality[60]

"*The expansion of the role of competing life-styles, the permeation of these styles into the home, the pervasiveness of music, the way in which products have become a direct extension of their advertising image, all these phenomena take a closing of the gap between the culture industry and everyday life itself, and a consequent aestheticization of social reality."*[61]

[58] Ibid.
[59] 'Why Modern Architecture Emerged in Europe, not America: The New Class and the Aesthetics of Technocracy,' David Gartman, in *Theory, Culture and Society* (2000, 17:75), pg. 79
[60] Adorno, Theodor W. *The Culture Industry: Selected Essays on Mass Culture* London: Routledge, 2001,pg. 23
[61] Ibid. C.f., Raymond's Williams' circular theory of hegemony, where values, tastes and styles interact dialectically between *residual*, *dominant*, and *emergent* cultures

It is at this point- the 'consequent aestheticization of social reality,' where I would depart from Adorno. Rather than assuming that the culture industry- organized, articulated and channelled downward from above- is a false reflection of the everyday life, Gartman points towards thinking about this process as *refracting* the antagonistic and contending cultural values between different social groups, allowing practices and ideas emerging from 'below' to infiltrate and transform the very values of the dominant.[62] In other words, the historic 'moment' of hegemony that is embodied by the mass culture industry for the first time produces the possibility that subordinate social groups actually have a say in the *form* of culture they wish to consume. The 'New Negro' movement and the Harlem Renaissance- though not covered in this thesis- typify moments in the 1920s where marginalised social groups not only gain an avenue of disseminating their cultural practices and ideas (made possible *only* by mass reproducibility), but are able to gain *political* leverage in the form of middle-class white constituencies who supported and consumed their products.[63] This is not to say that race relations suddenly were overturned overnight; but that the very *existence* of a vocal and locally (in New York) recognized authentic African-American art must say something about how mass reproducibility can open up political, social and cultural potentialities that were hitherto unthinkable (particularly in the context of the explicit racism of American organized labour movements in the late 19th and early 20th centuries[64].

Adorno's conceptualizing of the culture industry is, of course, tempered with the philosophical and political sensibilities of his European background, and whilst this thesis does not intend to be in any way a critique of his work, the manner in which he seeks to differentiate 'technique' in works of art versus works of the culture industry serves to illustrate a *lack* of historical understanding of the development of the arts in the United States; that is to say, its 19th century history of being simultaneously receptive to the high art (and indeed the categories of what makes something aesthetically 'pleasing') of Western Europe and its stern, austere vernacular art that developed through the progression of the

[62] Gartman, David *Auto Opium: A Social History of Automobile Design*, London: Routledge, 1994., pg. 8

[63] Osofsky, Gilbert *Harlem: The Making of a Ghetto: Negro New York, 1890-1930* , New York: Harper and Row, 1971., pg 10

[64] See Davis, Mike *Prisoners of the American Dream: Politics and Economy in the History of the U.S. Working Class*, London:Verso, 1986

nation from the Eastern seaboard to the Pacific.[65] As Alexis de Tocqueville identified 'In What Spirit the American Cultivate the Arts,':

"*They prefer books which may be **easily** produced, **quickly** read, and which require no learned researches to be understood. They ask for beauties **self-proffered** and **easily enjoyed**; above all, they must have what is **unexpected and new**. Accustomed to the struggle, the crosses and the **monotony of practical life**, they require **strong and rapid emotions, startling** passages, truths or errors brilliant enough to rouse them up and to plunge them at once, as if by **violence**, into the midst of the subject*."[66]

This historical conditioning of the *reception* and *consumption* of cultural objects in the United States appears to prefigure the rise of artistic modernism, with a focus on the shock of the new and pursuit of styles that spoke to the vernacular grammar of what was still a disconnected society of settlements. The integration of communications and transport networks following the Civil War meant that by the opening decades of the 20th century, a sense of 'national' culture *outside* the prevalent Custodian vision could develop for the first time; again it is under conditions of mass reproducibility of culture that this becomes possible.[67]

As such the key criticism I would have with Adorno and the Frankfurt School is the continuous attempt to define and separate 'authentic' art on the one hand and the kitsch, re-ified products of the mass culture industry on the other hand. Leo Lowenthal, in the essay 'Historical Perspectives of Popular Culture,' suggests that 'popular culture,' is 'spurious gratification,' as opposed to 'art as a genuine experience as a step to greater individual fulfillment.'[68] Lowenthal suggests that what *art* allows the individual to do is to 'appreciate what they once worshipped as beautiful,'[69] and therefore *to experience beauty is to 'be liberated from the overpowering domination of nature over mankind*.'[70] The question that is left beginning is if there is *any* possibility for individuals to experience a 'beauty,' under a socio-economic system that prioritizes the domination of *mankind over nature*? The authenticity of artworks, dissipated by mass reproducibility and trampled over by the mass

[65] Kouwenhoven, John Atlee *Made in America: The Arts in Modern Civilization*, New York: Doubleday & Co., 1948, pg. 12
[66] 'In What Spirit the American Cultivate the Arts,' Alexis de Tocqueville, in *Mass Culture: The Popular Arts in America*, Bernard Rosenberg and David Manning White (eds.), pg 33
[67] Carroll, Peter and Noble, David *The Free and the Unfree: A New History of the United States*, London: Penguin, 1977, pg., 112
[68] 'Historical Perspectives of Popular Culture,' Leo Lowenthal, in *Mass Culture: The Popoular Arts in America*, Bernard Rosenberg and David Manning White (eds.), pg 50
[69] Ibid.
[70] Ibid., pg 52

culture industry, remains the point of reference for the Frankfurt School authors. Taking cue from Walter Benjamin's *The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction*, Chapter 2 will argue that appreciation of 'beauty,' divorced from the 19th century bourgeois parameters of what constitutes aesthetic pleasure, undergoes a reform under conditions of artistic modernism and socio-economic modernization, and holds particular poignancy in the case of the United States- a nation, according to John Atlee Kouwenhoven, whose appreciation of 'beauty,' is anchored in the simplicity of tools, design and engineering[71]; that is to say, a nation whose appreciation of 'beauty,' lies not in the fine arts, realist literature and classical music of 19th century Europe, but in the grandeur of the Brooklyn Bridge, the skyscraping audacity of the Chrysler Tower and the immediate imagization of everyday life pioneered in the photography of Alfred Stieglitz and Charles Sheeler.[72] It is the uniqueness of this- traced back to Benjamin Franklin and Thomas Jefferson's appreciation of beauty in the grid designed avenues of early American town planning, in the certainty provided by mathematical calculation and 'simple' ordering,[73]- that we find the *power* of advertising imagery on the one hand- the ultimate 'dialectic' image that traces back through history and peers forward into the future[74]- and the 'rational' and 'scientific,' approached to market research and public relations.

However, in order to capture this power- which appears to have a 'dialectic' character that veers from the rational-scientific to the aesthetic- it is necessary to reconsider the conditions of political economy in which these images, objects and perceptions of beauty are produced *and consumed*. As already explained in section 1.2, the neo-Gramscian concept of hegemony which attempts to interrogate the conditions in which dominant norms and values saturate society to set the parameters of 'common sense,' focuses only on the *production* side of this coin, anchored in *Fordism*. I would now like to return to David Gartman and the concept of Sloanism, and why for neo-Gramscian international political-economic theory this can

[71] Kouwenhoven, John Atlee *Made in America: The Arts in Modern Civilization*, New York: Doubleday & Co., 1948, pg., 30

[72] Ibid. See also *Making the Modern*, Terry Smith and *The Brown Decades: A Study of the Arts in America, 1865-1895*, Lewis Mumford

[73] Baym, Max *A History of Literary Aesthetics in America*, New York: Ungar, 1973, pg., 135

[74] Benjamin, Walter 'N [Re the Theory of Knowledge, Theory of Progress]' in Gary Smith (ed.) *Benjamin: Philosophy, Aesthetics, History*, Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1989, pg. 50

expand the range of relationships, ideas and practices that are co-ordinated in critical analysis.

1.4 Sloanism and Mass Culture

The story of Henry Ford's rise, the standardization of mass production in the River Rouge Plant, the Five-Dollar Day, the Pinkerton Strike-breakers, the pacification of workers through Ford's sociological department, the integration of trade unions, and historical specificity of the New Deal. These will all be familiar to those acquainted with the concept of Fordism and the way in which neo-Gramscian theory used these as the building blocks to analyse American power following the liberal-welfare compromises at Bretton Woods.

Yet when explaining that power- the hegemony of capital in international political economy- the sense of how ruling political-economic elites reproduce themselves over time, and how their ideas and values *became* dominant, entrenched and expanded spatially, there is scant attention paid to the *style* in which the norms and values of that elite operated. I believe the key lies in re-tracing the precise period from which US hegemony began its ascent, and David Gartman offers a compelling narrative and critical interrogation of the role of Alfred Sloan, chairman of General Motors and Ford's principal rival at the time of the launch of the Model T.

Sloan's response to the success of the Model T was to introduce *stylistic* and *technical* obsolescence into the manufacturing of GM automobiles. The latter refers to mechanical aspects of the automobile's functioning that were designed to wear out- in short to bring problems to the consumer that would require the purchase of another car. The key, however, is the introduction of stylistic obsolescence; ornamental features of the automobile designed to go out of fashion, to be eclipsed by newer features that would 'appeal,' aesthetically, to both pre-existent and prospective car owners. By doing so, I argue that Sloan was responsible for the introduction of *perpetual consumption*, that is the continual purchase of the same product (or least a product that has the same use) based on perceptions of style and taste. One only has to think about the Apple Corporation in the 21st century, its range of electronic products and the rate at which each of these products is re-branded as an updated model (approximately every 18-24 months).

Sloan tapped into the *idea of mobility* that in America sits uneasily with the idea of class organization. The question is then, in what kind of social conditions could a company such as General Motors 'create' the desire for people to want to buy the same product over and over again? I propose that it is in conditions i) *where the 'products' of a mass persuasion complex become consumable to the mass*, ii) *where the 'sense' of social mobility co-exists with but ultimately eclipses class-based political organization*, iii) *where sufficiently diverse artistic styles facilitate a particular sense of individuality upon consumers*.

As such, whilst acknowledging the importance of Fordism and the idea of power being rooted in relations of *production*[75] Gartman showcases a 'mirror-image' of power being refracted in the relations of *consumption*. He argues that Gramsci's insights in 'Americanism and Fordism' understands Fordism not just as the innovation (if not revolution) of production methods, but also to the *new mode and standard of living which necessarily accompanies them*.[76] This 'standard of living,' I will argue in Chapter 4, is a part of a *broader iconology of American Modernity capitalism*, one that is designed, imagized (particularly through the medium of photography), disseminated through an interaction with styles and values that *do not necessarily emerge from the capitalist political-economic elite*. And whilst the consumption patterns of working classes changed after the introduction of the five-dollar day, the *motor* of that change is the idea that consuming certain goods or products fulfills the sense of mobility and makes *emulation* and *aspiration* of styles perceived to be 'higher' graspable for the working classes for the first time.[77] Gartman, in the process of criticism of the French Regulation school, suggests that the lack of attention to the aesthetics of political economy and emphasis on the logics of systemic reproduction results in scant attention being paid to *how* and *why* the working classes and growing white collar class were persuaded in a relatively short period to actively participate in the mass consumption market.[78]

Assumptions regarding systemic reproduction and institutionalised regulation allude to the appearance of commodities being dictated by the necessities of mass production alone, with manipulative advertising rendering them satisfactory for consumer wants- what Gartman calls 'functionalist aesthetics.' However, this ignores the innovations in product design and short-term profitability strategies, including superficial distinction, product hierarchy, planned

[75] This is particularly in Robert Cox (1996) and Mark Rupert (1995)
[76] Gartman, David *Auto Opium: A Social History of Automobile Design*, London: Routledge, 1994, pg., 9-12
[77] Ibid., pg. 24
[78] Ibid., pg. 18

obsolescence and stylising ornamentation- for which the foundation of mass consumption becomes the aesthetics of change and diversity, stimulating consumer demand sufficient to maintain high-volume mass production. [79]

Gartman also provides a nuanced criticism of Adorno's *Culture Industry*. As stated in the Introduction, if we understand culture as historically serving as 'a repository of human needs that are not fully realised within a given form of society- art, music, literature and crafts having provided an outlet for the free, self-determining activity that human beings needs'[80] (as active, productive and creative beings) *but* are denied by the class structure of society, then *culture can thus serve a critical function in society by reminding people of those needs unjustly denied them and holding out promise of future fulfillment*.

Gartman argues that the central tenant of the Critical school is that the utopian function of culture is all but eliminated in advanced capitalism with the rise of **mass culture**, which rather than serving as a repository of human needs, turns into an ideological adaptation of human needs to the requirements of capitalist mass production..*[81]*
Due to the dehumanising rationale behind the profit motive in the era mass production, and its associated constraining of human freedom through the control of capitalist agents, people find refuge from the realm of production into the private realm of consumption in the home. The key transformation however, is that rather than recuperate meaningful autonomy and individuality and participating in culture within their already constrained time, 'victims' are *pursued by the logic of reification in the form of consumer products and prevents culture from providing the critical negation of capitalist work.*[82]

The emergence of the 'culture industry,' then, marks a significant and eventually societal-wide transformation in the way in which individuals comprehend and augment their own needs. The depiction of people being 'chased' by this capitalist behemoth, being led into the deception of the mass consumption market may seem exaggerated, but it is only via this device that Adorno and Horkheimer avoid their own fears of producing a reified critique. The culture industry supposedly provides people with leisure commodities and services to alleviate people's dehumanising experience; but since the production of these cultural goods

[79] Ibid.
[80] Ibid., pg. 8
[81] Ibid., pg. 14
[82] Ibid., pg. 8

is governed by the same logic of reification as in other forms of mass production, the culture industry also turns out standardised, dehumanised products that reinforces capitalist social relations at the very same time that it is supposed to provide a route of escape. *Mass consumption is then the prolongation and ideological reinforcement of capitalist mass production*.[83]

However, despite the focus of the aesthetics of the product as a means of entrenching the logic of reification into the mass consumption market, Gartman highlights the limitations of Critical Theory on two aspects; firstly. *the potentiality for resistance is seen to be precluded by the ideological integration of needs to the requirements of mass production*, hence debilitating social change as people are largely satisfied with their state of domination, perhaps even complicit with it.[84]

"*Consumer complacency has so thoroughly gripped the masses that the traditional Marxist idea of class struggle is rendered a conceptual relic*."[85]

Secondly, the depiction of a total suppression of *real* human needs through the medium of the emergent culture industry leads us to conceive of this transformation as one of the continual manipulation of the passive masses by conspiratorial elites, which distorts the *historical process by which mass consumption arose and became adjusted to mass production*. By emphasizing the permanent passivity of the working class in the processes and structures of the culture industry, Adorno and Horkheimer negate the historically contingent role the working class had in shaping the Fordist regime of accumulation, one that even they could analyse retrospectively as a protracted class conflict.[86]

[83] Ibid., pg. 14
[84] Ibid., pg. 16
[85] Ibid.
[86] Ibid., pg. 9

1.5 Class Consciousness and Social Practices in the US

"*The undertow is changing, the tide is at the turn. It is disquieting or inspiriting, according to one's prejudices, to observe the extraordinarily slow shifting of sympathy in matters industrial, during the past twenty-five years, toward the side of the worker.*"[87]

"*Class formation needs to be understood not only as a social struggle, but as a conceptual struggle, one in which men and women elaborated and defended competing visions of class relations*."[88]

Aside from the 6% polled by Eugene Debs in the 1912 Presidential election, as candidate for the Socialist Party, organized labour as a political force in the United States has been perceived to have a negligible impact upon the mainstream political arena. Consciousness of working class solidarity is assumed to have been undermined by a number of reasons anchored in the American 'exceptionalist' school of history. Tangible and lived social cleavages over race and immigration after the Civil War in particular are mooted as explanations of why no *nationally* coherent idea of an American working class emerged, in what was arguably the most advanced capitalist nation at the turn of the 20th century. To put it a different way, why was it in the nation where the exploitative relationship between capital and labour seemed most stark, where the socio-economic upheaval engendered by capitalist modernization produced the largest gap between a small wealthy elite and the masses, was there not even the slightest inclination of revolutionary fervour, or even a nationally organized political force capable of disrupting the rule of the political-economic elite?

In *Minding the Machine: Languages of Classes in Early Industrial America*, Stephen Price argues that In the 1830s, there is evidence to suggest that 'class' in the US was understood in a sense closer to the Marxian concept; Seth Luther in *An Address to the Working-men of New England, on the State of Education and on the Condition of the Producing Classes in Europe and America* characterised the 'factory system of production' as inhumane and underpinned by avarice. Speaking about the context of mechanization of textile mill industry in New

[87] 'Class Consciousness,' Vida Schutter, in *The Atlantic Monthly* (1911, 107:3), pg. 321. Accessed from Hathi Trust Digital Library Holdings: The Atlantic Monthly. http://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=mdp.39015030109881;size=75;view=image;page=root;seq=331;num=321

[88] Price, Stephen *Minding the Machine: Languages of Class in Early Industrial American* Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004, pg., 27

England, he pointed to the long hours of work, rigid work rules, use of child labour and use of corporal punishment.[89]

The structuring material conditions for the variance and debate about the nature of class were the gradual and uneven move from familiar forms of household and craft production to mechanized ones. Luther used explicit and oppositional language of class to depict American society as it transformed into a machine based civilization, highlighting that the most salient divide in the world of work was between the 'producing classes,' and those who 'monopolized wealth.' Within years, working class journeymen had formed trade unions and radical craft unions to challenge what they saw as the inequities of the emerging industrial order. As such, there *was* a point where the discourse of class was the most important 'moment' of political organization and acts of collective resistance.[90]

Yet of course, there existed a group- most notably the authors of the *North American Review*- that whilst understanding the disruptive nature of mechanization. 'Rather than inscribing inequality, mechanization tended to undo hierarchies of old and make it possible for everyone to improve themselves and their lot.'[91] Price's question is this: how did members of a nascent middle class manage to promote and defend their social authority in the face of troubling and divisive questions about work and mechanization?

His answer is that class formation was not so much located in the material conditions of the workplace, but in a broad, popular discourse on mechanization, *one that occurred in movements and activities that were for the most part on the periphery of more traditional notions of industrialization*, for example educational movements such as the mechanic's institute movement and manual labour school movement, health reform activities.[92]

Price's overall argument is that American men and women who were *coming to perceive themselves as middle class* in the decades before 1860 consolidated their authority and minimized the potential for class conflict in part by representing the social relations of the industrial workplace as necessarily *co-operative* rather than *oppositional*[93], and organizes a

[89] Ibid., pg. 15
[90] Ibid., pg. 20
[91] Ibid., pg. 22
[92] Ibid.
[93] Ibid., pg. 14

three-level framework of understanding the character and meaning of class and class consciousness in the United States:

1) There is the 'making of class,' the forging of social relations under factory conditions, the role of the machine in dehumanizing workers, and the hierarchized division between the producers of wealth and the accumulators of wealth.
2) There is *class* as the comprehension of social relations; the discursive battle to establish whether the issues generated from the 'making of class' are translatable into meaningful political contests. I.e., is the actual political battlefield to be constructed around the class divisions emerging through industrialization.
3) The 'gap' between the material reality of a *hierarchically class divided society* and a *society conditioned on the idea of political equality* is supplemented by the rise of a powerful, persuasive discourse from the nascent American middle classes that analogously correlated the exploitative social relations between the proprietors and wage-workers with i) the 'head,' and the 'hand,' ii) the 'mind' and 'body,' and iii) the 'human' and 'machine.'[94]

In other words, Price contends that the relationships between proprietors/managers and wage-workers *became* one conditioned by the idea that wage-workers *needed* managers; a relationship that needed the careful nurturing of mutual respect, for the sake of each other's safety in the factory, and in society more broadly. In light of this, I would argue that this conditioning laid the ground for the ideals and discourses of upward mobility and emulation that prevailed towards the end of the 19th century- that is to say, the respect afforded by workers to their managers in a framework of hierarchical co-operation, opened up the desire for workers to emulate the styles, ideas and values of their managers.

Martin Burke argues that 'class' as a term in America suffers from consistent contradiction. Distinction between political 'classes' is often not recognized because of the power of the *idea* of political equality. However, socio-economic class categorization is recognized in public discourse at the end of the 19th century, at least in an *occupational* manner; 'capitalists, landlords, merchants, professional men, farmers and laborers.'[95] The essential 'conundrum'

[94] Ibid., pg. 23-25
[95] Burke, Martin J. *The Conundrum of Class: Public Discourse and Social Order in America,* Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1995, pg. 6

of class in America rests on the problem with *politically encoding* class with discernable characteristics. 'Labor,' the 'proletariat,' and 'working class,' prove to be the most difficult and antagonistic terms in public discourse through the 19th century- and an 'elastic one under which any number of social fallacies may be hidden.'[96] Coleman and Rainwater likewise argue that in modern industrial society, the extremely elaborate divisions of labour which are interpenetrated by political and economic institutions render the pinning down of 'class' as a category with discernable, shared interests nearly impossible without sacrificing potentially non-'reward' interests that cut through, intersect and reshape class lines (for example, the way in which they find reward through the consumption of certain products, the maintenance of particular lifestyles and adherence to/emulation of cultural tastes).[97]

Coleman and Rainwater suggest that individuals can belong to many, potentially antagonistic social groups, with no necessary correlation between relative standing to the three Weberian hierarchies of class, status and power with individuals having 'multi-dimensional relationships' to others even within each of the three systems of division. Thus whilst we can broadly inculcate social characteristics, values and interests to the 'managerial class' in order to bring structure to the way in which we understand how this group operates and negotiates the domain of resources and rewards with other social and political groups, we at the same time *lose* the intra-class nuances and contradictions that contribute to the shaping of that broad perspective in the first instance.[98] For example, whilst both a departmental manager of an insurance company and account executive of an advertising firm may both be a part of the lower rung of the 'managerial' class- accepting the norms of corporate management practices, guidelines as well as the tangential requirements of profit-making- their cultural, social ideals and practices outside the domain of workplace may be oppositional or completely detached; the insurance company manager may be less inclined to keep up with the latest trends in design and art, or be in tune with the potentials of media and communications, as an advertising executive would have to as both part of their job as well as their habitation within a 'cultural' industry that keeps a keen eye on the latest trends and styles in art, fashion and techniques of artistic/cultural creation and dissemination. Affecting their perception of themselves as well as others, Coleman and Rainwater suggest that the consciousness of culture can easily override a class consciousness that is anchored in the

[96] Ibid.
[97] Coleman, Richard and Rainwater, Lee *Social Standing in America: New Dimensions of Class* New York: Basic Books, 1978, pg. 5
[98] Ibid., pg 9

workplace or in perceived harmonious social networks created through traditional class positions. Furthermore, they argue that even within an organization, the stratification and sophisticated compartmentalization of work tasks that takes place under managerial, Taylorist style corporate reform leaves the potential for multiple fracturing within the same industries:

"*The arena of competitive struggle between unequal powers that characterizes class, defined as a group sharing common interests, is perhaps better conceived as an ecology of games than as a simple stratification. Class mobilization and class alliances are perhaps better understood as complex and shifting political struggles than as set battle pieces.*"[99]

The example of the early 20th century showcases clearly this perspective; whilst 'traditional' battle pieces are certainly present, the authors fail to adequately suggest precisely the 'ecology of games,' through which this conflict is both played out within as well as providing *meaning* to the terrains of conflict. Taking into account Price's account of the *discursivity* of class discourse in the United States, the suggestion is that late 19th century debates over mechanization and the antagonistic, oppositional concept of class emerging from real practices gradually received its 'containment' within a broader discourse of inclusive class relationships which simultaneously stressed the co-operative elements of class and social order as well as the achieved political equality ascribed by the constitution.

"*The Great Depression furnished the most ironic experience of all. Despite a cataclysmic collapse of the productive system and the economic class war that the crisis unleashed , the political battlements of American capitalism held firm. Indeed it can be argued that the* ***hegemony*** *of the political system was reinforced and extended during this period*."[100]

The above quote emphasizes the key motivational issue for this thesis; what were the conditions of class relationships in the United States that allowed the ruling elites in the US to circumvent destabilizing challenges to their leadership during the greatest crisis in capitalist history? Given the actual long lineage of labour organization in the United States (Davis argues that the 1828 foundation of the Philadelphia artisans can be counted as the first definitive instance of a 'Labour Party'[101]). In *Prisoners of the American Dream*, Mike Davis provides a nuanced and sensitive historical account of the role of working classes in the American political economy. He argues that there *is* a highly developed working class consciousness in the US, but it is defined by mass political abstentionism- non-engagement

[99] Ibid.
[100] Davis, Mike *Prisoners of the American Dream: Politics and Economy in the History of the U.S. Working Class* London:Verso, 1986, pg. 13
[101] Ibid., pg. xii

with the principal political system, acknowledgement that their *interests* and *aspirations* are historically anchored *outside* the prevailing norms of American politics. The 'atomized' and 'mute' protest of modern American workers were not only due to the lack of independent party of the proletariat. How can the country that invented the Labor party and May Day lack such a nationwide political organization for the working masses, he ponders?[102]

Early fascination with an American development of working classes- by Marx, Engels, Lenin and Trotsky- posited that its political organization would fold out according to 'objective' laws of historical development; that its 'immaturity, 'was put down to *transient* (i.e., temporary, conjunctural and ready to be overcome) factors that would also later be used to create the historiographical terrain of 'American Exceptionalism,' that is the role of the 'frontier,' continuous immigration, the fusion of agrarian-democratic ideologies with petty-bourgeois property, international hegemony of American capital. These supposedly transient conditions- which ended with the completion of the frontier, the restriction on immigration, the triumph of corporate monopoly over small capital and the decline of US capital's lead in world industrial productivity- would allow the *real* permanent historical determinants arising out of the structure of the capitalist mode of production to emerge more coherently, with systemic economic crisis (manifest as social crisis during the Great Depression) generating a widespread class struggle whose violence would be the springboard for political action *through* the existent bourgeois-democratic institutions of American politics which had (during the period of *transient* conditionality) been an obstacle to working class politics.[103]

Yet the Debs adventure of 1912 remains the high-point of working class politics in the US (at least if we are to understand working class agency purely in terms of its translation into successful political struggle); Mike Davis argues that what happened to socialism in the US amounts to a 'fratricide,' reflecting the profound and often unique constellations of social, cultural and politics-economic antagonisms that corroded the labour movement in the US in the early 20th century.[104]

As such, the traditional Marxist portrayal of 'proletarian immaturity,' cannot fully realise the concrete and historical transformation of American society as a process of class struggle, with

[102] Ibid., pg 2
[103] Ibid., pg. 11-15
[104] Ibid., pg. 20

over-riding objective historical law-analysis standing in the way of assessing the 'relative permanence of the decisive sociological or cultural features that have historically differentiated the United States.'[105]

Davis shifts attention to another branch of 'exceptionalism,' rooted in liberal metaphysics, where the uniqueness of American history is located in the absence of a feudal structure or 'the ubiquity of job culture.'[106] The lack of feudal class struggles and relative security of the Lockean world-view meant that the political incorporation of the proletariat was *predestined* in the US; the 'socialist' consciousness of Europe is as such a result of the industrialization within the parameters of an emergent bourgeois order that retained relics of feudalism- the US, being *borne as* a bourgeois society, apparently lacked the necessary tensions to produce the kind of socialism that emerged in Europe, with principles of social and political equality enshrined from the outset,[107] and argument that Gramsci himself was particularly prescient at understanding:

"*America does not have 'great historical and cultural traditions' ; but neither does it have this leaden burden to support . This is one of the main reasons (and certainly more important than its so-called natural wealth) for its formidable accumulation of capital which has taken place in spite of the superior living standard enjoyed by the popular classes compared with Europe*"[108]

Davis argues that both the orthodox Marxist and American exceptionalist schools make a mistake in the *terms of reference* through which class or class consciousness might be understood in the US; whilst Marx et al were correct to affirm the central role of class struggle in the shaping of American history, the classics 'tend to underestimate the role of sedimented historical experiences of the working class as they influenced and circumscribed its capacities for development in succeeding periods.'[109] This idea of the historical sedimentation of historical experience is something which Gramsci notes as 'common sense.'[110]

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[105] Ibid., pg 7
[106] Ibid.
[107] Ibid.
[108] Forgacs, David (ed.) *The Gramsci Reader: Selected Writings, 1916-1935*, New York: New York University Press, 2000, pg. 278
109 Davis, Mike *Prisoners of the American Dream: Politics and Economy in the History of the U.S. Working Class* London:Verso, 1986., pg. 9
[110] Forgacs, David (ed.) *The Gramsci Reader: Selected Writings, 1916-1935*, New York: New York University Press, 2000, pg. 327

Therefore Davis' key point is there is a *qualitatively* different level of class consciousness and intra-class cohesion in the US- a consolidation between the working class and American capitalism- in comparison to the advanced social-democratic formations that were consolidated in Western Europe after the Second World War. The 'trajectory' of class struggle in the US highlights 'epochal' conflicts between capital and labour during periods of economic crisis, with each periodic resolution of these collisions being new 'structural forms that regulated the objective conditions for accumulation in the next period as well as the subjective capacities for class organization and consciousness.'[111]

Davis conceptualizes this process as one of continuous (but by no means assured) *generational* defeats of the working class, each disarming it in some vital aspect. Whereas in Europe, working classes became politically incorporated through the agency of labour reform (in the sense that their relationship to capitalism is mediated and regulated by *collective, self-formed institutions* at political, economic and cultural levels), the lack of collective institutions or 'totalizing agent of class consciousness (i.e., the party)' in the US meant that its working class was integrated into American capitalism its 'negativities of internal stratification,'- privatization in consumption and disorganization vis-a-vis political and trade union bureaucracies.[112]

In the political realm, general levels of enfranchisement were already three quarters of all white males in New England by 1750, and by Andrew Jackson's second term in 1832, property qualification had disappeared in all but four states. As such, *popular sovereignty*- which required a century long struggle of the working class males of Europe- was already the *pre-existent* ideological and institutional framework for America's industrialization and proletarian development.[113]

Another important distinguishing point between the US and Europe was the actual class composition that assumed leadership of the democratic movements. With the US *beginning* its independent national existence as a democracy, its leadership was dominated without challenge by political representatives of the bourgeoisie- those sedimented patterns of liberal thought and practice inherited from 17th century England perhaps securing the political power

[111] Davis, Mike *Prisoners of the American Dream: Politics and Economy in the History of the U.S. Working Class* London:Verso, 1986., pg. 9
[112] Ibid., pg. 13
[113] Ibid., pg. 16

of private property as *national* interest. The 'historically specific configurations,' of large merchants, bankers, big capitalist landowners or planters and industrialists was therefore in an ironic sense the only genuinely classical revolutionary-democratic bourgeoisie in world history, in the sense that unlike the political ascent of other bourgeoisie, the American bourgeois did not have to rely on auxilliary 'plebian' wings to defeat aristocratic reaction.[114]

Davis locates the reason for this in the nature of the American bourgeois-democratic revolution; rather than one pitted against decaying feudal relations, it was a 'unique process of capitalist national liberation involving, in the period, from 1760 to 1860, a multi-phase struggle against the constraints imposed by a globally hegemonic British capital on the growth of a native bourgeois society.'[115]

1.6 Public Relations, Propaganda and Social Control: Establishing the Parameters of Mass Persuasion

In Mark Rupert's neo-Gramscian reconstruction of the symmetries of global power, he locates the transformation in production taking place in the United States at the end of the 19th century and beginning of the 20th century as a key moment from which a subsequent analysis of the neoliberal hegemonic bloc of the contemporary period can historically progress. In particular, Rupert identifies in previous chapters the importance of American Labour Organisations in the post-war reconstruction settlements, in what he essentially argues represented a historical accommodation of labour as a section in a broader arc of capitalistic ideology. In particular, agreements and conciliations of US Labour facilitated the Marshall Plan and Bretton Woods agreements that emphasised trade, capital accumulation and social prosperity as tenents of its purpose.[116]

However, there were of course concrete social and material changes that allowed this accommodation of American labour, or the 'Politics of Production,' into key international agreements that would shape the international political economy over the period from 1945-1973; particularly the cementing of the US in the institutionalised neoliberal world order.

[114] Ibid., pg 17
[115] Ibid., pg 20
[116] Rupert, Mark *Producing Hegemony: The Politics of Mass Production and American Global Power* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995, pg. 59

Rupert's central contention is that: 'the asymmetrical power of American statesmen, capitalists, and labour leaders within the neoliberal world order was to a great extent based upon the ideological frameworks they developed and the social relations they constructed as they created a mass production, mass consumption society in the US.'[117] In other words Rupert argues that retrospectively channelling the configurations of contemporary global power and world order through a Gramscian lens cannot be undertaken successfully without pausing to consider how that change, and the configuration of actors and interest behind that change, occurred in the first instance. Rupert therefore traces the rise of this historical bloc (which appears in the post-war environment as an internationalised formation) to domestic transformations in the labour process and particularly the creation of an economy based on mass production of goods, the expansion of the domestic and foreign market to sell these goods, and the rise of mass consumption of these goods to successfully buoy the US economy and crystallise the forces that would eventually internationalise after the second world war.

As such, Rupert's construction of hegemony- and therefore the *ability* of political-elites to secure a spontaneous moment of consent- is rooted in assumptions of productivist ideology and the key compromises and strategies of control between capital and labour *within the sites of production itself*- namely the mass production factory. However, it is the contention of this thesis that the very same 'moment' of consent requires a mirror-image focus on the ideologies of *consumption* that culturally legitimate such an epochal transformation of capitalist society. This 'focus' requires us to take a closer inspection at the avenues and channels *available* in society that can capture and articulate this moment of consent- and it is here that we turn to the 'Propaganda' of Edward Bernays

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Defining 'propaganda' for Bernays is an exercise in replacing subjectivity with objectivity; a plea for the neutralisation of a word that has been damaged through its semiotic skewering by the national European governments and agencies involved in the latter part of the First World War. Following the establishment of propaganda as a healthy means by which those soothsayers in society attempt to disseminate some 'truth' that has been miraculously revealed to them, Bernays defines propaganda as:

[117] Ibid., pg. 60

"..a consistent, enduring effort to create or shape events to influence the relations of the public to an enterprise, idea or group."[118]

The utilisation of propaganda as a means of spreading and garnering positive public opinion exists through the creative facilities in society; whether it be business and government, or healthcare and charity. Due to the pervasiveness of propaganda in this time of mass urban society (e.g., the Improvement of the Condition of the Poor of New York must use propaganda for its purposes to make people understand and believe that their project is a necessary good for the whole), the phenomena of a genuine social, but not necessarily homogenous, consciousness can come to fruition in a state of constant affection by the mental pictures created through propaganda; for even audio propaganda is garnered to produce a particular depiction that is realised in mental-visual cognition (particularly if visual and audio propaganda are co-ordinated). In all, propaganda is a tool; a device to maintain rule, and in the case of the expanding consumer market in the US, a means by which to expand and reproduce the socio-economic system, though this is not explicitly called for nor imagined by Bernays. The First World War was a watershed moment in the use of propaganda and recognition by a heterogeneous ruling class of its advantages in organising society to their cause and beliefs.

"*The manipulators of patriotic opinion made use of the mental clichés and the emotional habits of the public to produce mass reactions against the alleged atrocities, the terror and tyranny of the enemy*"[119]

But the use of propaganda evolves in peace time; what Bernays deems as 'new' propaganda takes account not only of the individual and mass mind, but the very anatomy of society, its group formations and interlocking loyalties. Indeed, the very 'taste' of society, or certain sections of it are also receptive to the propaganda of an articulated effort to change and manipulate fashion. The fetishistic aspect of this has a natural relationship with commodity and its use-value; but modern propaganda allows this phenomenon to expand beyond the individual to larger formations

Bernays argues that because the manipulating processes take place on a variety of levels, e.g., the vertical relationships between economic and financial advisors, politicians, local community leader and taxpayers, or the horizontal relationships between fashion designers,

[118]Bernays, Edward *Propaganda* New York: Horace Liverlight, 1930, pg. 12
[119] Ibid.

manufacturing houses, advertising agencies and the consumer. Because of the increasing size of 'the masses' and the complexity of the socio-political and economic system (which as we have already noted, are way too complex for the average citizen to understand), the co-ordination of propaganda itself becomes a specialised labour, involving a concentration of resources and information in the hands of the few, at the behest of the 'invisible government.' This gives rise to a new cadre, and the birth of the public relations industry, interpreting enterprises and ideas to the public and crucially, interpreting the public to the enterprises, corporations and government.

However, the rise of this specialised cadre at a particular historical juncture in the development of US society has much to do with the way in which the nation state (as a concept) developed from a protracted seizure of power from a post feudal elite to the management class that mediated the interests of the burgeoning capitalist economy with an articulated national identity. Whilst the national state developed initially from a premise of liberty and equality whilst in practice concentrating social co-ordination and power within a few, tight-knit social classes (political idealist, lawyers, capitalists, old aristocracy), the development of mass urban literate society rendered this tenuous, contradictory relationship between 'the democratic nation' and hegemony of social order increasingly to exposure as a vacuous, deceptive phenomena. Hence, at a 'moment' when society reaches this critical mass of potential rebellion (against the deception of a hegemonic class), the necessity for propaganda becomes even more pertinent; if the increasing complexity of modern life necessitates making the actions of one part of the public (the dominant socio-economic class) comprehensible to another part of the public (the masses), then this requires a dependence of organised power upon public opinion. In sum, the stability of governments and hegemony of an ever-exposed socio-economic order in the age of mass urban capitalism depend upon an acquiescent public opinion for the success of their efforts- in short they and their actions need social legitimation through the mechanism of liberal democracy.

I would argue that whilst Bernays does not specifically address the strategies of propaganda as an *aesthetic* issue, he nonetheless points towards forms of media- 'advertising slogans,' 'editorials,' 'trivialities of the tabloids,' and 'platitudes of history,' that were turning towards the sentimental and emotional avenues of capturing the public attention during an era of disorientating transformation. Typifying Bernays' approach, by contextualizing these aesthetic frames within 'published scientific data,' he recognised the power of the *idea* of

science- and the determinedness of 'fact' that it provides for public consumption. The key point here is that Bernays persists in using the banner of science, psychoanalysis to bring some legibility and social acceptance to strategies of mass persuasion that are intrinsically deceptive and organised around capturing the sentimental and emotional 'hooks' that people develop; a grand posture is developed that simultaneously negotiates both the private, personal insecurities of a society increasingly self-judged on fashion, tastes and assumptions of mobility *as well as* variant discourses of American history (and by association, the American 'character) that celebrate its triumphant entry into the early 20th century and gradual rise to the apex of international power; in short, using historical discourses as diverse as Manifest Destiny, Jeffersoniansim, etc, to create a 'Beautiful' and 'Sublime' vision of American destiny.

In 'The Psychology of Public Relations,' Bernays describes the attitudinal aspect of the burgeoning profession of propaganda. Mass psychology is different from individual psychology, but man in group has specific, discernible, scientifically comprehensible features that are amenable to manipulation and control through understanding of motivations and impulses; hence if we understand the mechanism and motives of the 'group mind'- here a clear reference to the masses- it becomes possible for the invisible government to control and regiment it.

Bernays emphasises that due to man's gregarious nature, in social life there is practically (for the purposes of the propagandist) no distinction between the individual and mass psychology- so that whilst an individual, when making a decision (Bernays uses the example of a man choosing what stocks to buy) may believe that they are making independent, even rational choices, their judgement is in fact a 'mélange of impressions' stamped on the mind by outside influences which unconsciously control the thought process. He cites a study from Trotter and Le Bon- that the group mind does not *think,* but has impulses, habits and emotions. The first impulse is to follow the example of a trusted leader. When a trusted leader is absent, the second impulse of the group mind is to think in terms of clichés or images which stand for a whole group or experience. *Hence the role of the propagandist is orientated around manipulating or reshaping old and new clichés to swing a whole mass of group emotions*.

"*The psychologists of the school of Freud re-iterate that people's thoughts and actions are compensatory substitutes for desires which they have been compelled to suppress. An object is not desired for its intrinsic worth or usefulness, but because the subject has unconsciously come to see in it a symbol of something else*"[120]

In this, Bernays suggests that the object- whether that be a physical commodity, or a cultural artefact or action (say a visit to the theatre)- becomes imbued with *aesthetic* properties that represent something about the individual's feeling towards his or her society. Remarkably close to the Marxian concept of 'commodity fetishism,' I will use in Chapter 2 in liaison with Walter Benjamin's essay *The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction* that in the United States the specificity of both mass reproducibility and mass persuasion was to link the triumph of the *idea* of social mobility with the fashions and tastes of classes or social groups perceived to be higher. Walter Lippmann similarly addresses these concerns in *Public Opinion*- a more sceptic analysis of the rise of public opinion and propaganda, and the dangers they possess for the health of American democracy.

Lippmann, like Bernays, shows sensitivity to the difference between the 'private' and the 'public' self; in particular he remarks that the latter is 'stage-managed' by forces outside personal control.[121] These forces are involved in the creation of a mental environment of symbols and perceptions; again like Bernays, Lippmann's experience in the Committee for Public Information exposed him to the highly stylized American wartime propaganda, causing him to conclude that 'the only feeling that anyone can have about an event he does not experience is the feeling aroused by his mental image of that event.'[122]
However, during peacetime, social symbols become fragmented, as political ideals such as national unity in the face of an enemy are of less importance in the everyday life. Lippmann notes that as a result, 'symbolic pictures are no less governant of behaviour, but each symbol is far less inclusive because there are so many *competing* ones.'[123]

Drawing on his analysis of behaviour in both war and peacetime, and the looming affect of social symbolism and public opinion, Lipmann identifies a common factor; that is *the insertion between man and his environment of a pseudo-environment*[124] (i.e., the pictures in our heads). Behaviour is a response to the pseudo-environment, and presumably conditions

[120] Ibid., pg. 14
[121] Lippmann, Walter *Public Opinion*, London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd, 1929, pg. 10-14
[122] Ibid.
[123] Ibid.
[124] Ibid., pg. 22

the manifestation of that pseudo-environment at a 'mass' level, i.e., when many people exhibit similar behaviour, continuously, to the same constructed (and re-ified) pseudo-environment. However, the consequences of that behaviour 'operate not in the pseudo-environment where the behaviour is stimulated, but in the real environment where action eventuates.[125] Behaviour here means not just physical action, but also thought and emotion (i.e., responsive)- and is a contributory factor in the maladjustment of people from their pseudo-environment to their real material environment. In any case, Lippmann argues that any potential 'adjustment takes place through the *medium of fictions*.[126]

Hence, to what extent does a technological tool of control, such as propaganda, public relations and advertising, entrench the 'medium' of fictions even more deeply within society, facilitating the composite ruling class to reproduce itself through appeals to a variety of emotive fictions? ***It is argued that the sophistication of propaganda techniques and its incorporation into networks of mass production and mass consumption deepen the medium of fictions and increase the conceptual distance between the pseudo-environment and real material environment.*** Furthermore, this 'conceptual distance' is a real, lived space of socio-cultural practices and ideas that at the very least *facilitate* the potential for counter-hegemonic or emergent politics to affect or influence prevailing and dominant hegemonic values. This 'site,' then- which from the ideas of the Lockean Heartland introduced by Kees Van der Pijl I propose is the very development of Civil Society in advanced capitalist nations[127]- 'domesticates' transnationally circulated ideas of artistic modernism, giving rise to an 'authentic' aesthetic vision of American national culture, promulgated and spread rapidly by co-ordinated and integrated systems of mass persuasion.

"*In fact, human culture, is very largely the selection, the rearrangement, the tracing of patterns upon, and the stylizing of… 'the random irradiations and resettlements of our ideas.'"*[128]

The above quote begins the basis of Lippmann's justification of propaganda- particularly the assertion that the 'fictions' of environment that he speaks of are to a lesser or greater degree

[125] Ibid., pg. 24-25
[126] Ibid.
[127] I propose here that Van der Pijl's articulation of Civil Society, as developing from a particular space or distance afforded to individuals and groups outside the ruling classes in the historically specific formation of the Lockean state/society complex, gives rise to the *potential* of divergent and counter-hegemonic practices emergin from below to influence or be absorbed by the dominant forns of control.
[128] Lippmann, Walter *Public Opinion*, London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd, 1929, pg. 21

created by men themselves. Like Bernays, Lippmann envisages a social and political world of such complexity that it exceeds the rational competency of comprehension by the average citizen. In addition, its 'fleetingness'- here taken to mean its rapid transformation and potentially disorientating sense of antagonisms and contradictions- requires a stronger mind to absorb and explain the subtleties that lie beyond the pseudo-environment of the mental picture and characterise the proceedings of the real material environment. The real environment (which in any case is understood within the confines of the pseudo-environment) must be reconstructed into a simpler model before it can be managed, meaning that before action has even taken place, the subject is 'two abstract levels' detached from material reality.

"The analyst of public opinion must begin then, by recognising the triangular relationship between the scene of action, the human picture of that scene, and the human response to that picture working itself out upon the scene of action."[129]

This summarises the two-level abstraction that public opinion (and public relations) experts must grasp and act upon in accordance with who they are seeking to advice, and for which purposes the advisee needs that information for. This thesis argues that essentially, the information (or pictures) garnered by public opinion expertise augments the ability of a ruling class order to effectively manipulate the domain of these pictures in order to reproduce itself over time, entrench its norms, visions and discursive power into the fabric of social relations, and successfully circumvent the potentialities for subversion or counter-hegemonic destabilisation through a 'rephrasing' mechanism, that being an aesthetic domain (socially specific) which is malleable enough to reform itself into another picture. *However*, if we consider the particularities of class structure- or more relevantly the *mobile* sense of class consciousness- in the United States, we can further amplify the sense how hegemony actually 'plays out' under such conditions of mass persuasion. In particular it will be argued that the ability of public opinion makers to *do what they do* is enhanced by the integration of non-elite artists and technicians into the mass persuasion industries. Therefore what might appear as a 'top-down' manipulation, is actually a more circular transition of ideas and practices from variant and antagonistic social groups, bringing the final, aestheticized form of hegemony a grammar that can speak to the multitude in a vernacular already understood, as well as point towards future forms of style that likewise associates itself with the idea of class mobility. Raymond Williams, I argue in the next chapter, confronts this problem successfully by

[129] Lippmann, Walter *Public Opinion*, London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd, 1929, pg. 30

imagining hegemony as a dialectic circulation of ideas, styles and practices between *residual, dominant and emergent* cultures, and the social groups that embody those cultures.

1.7 Conclusion

This chapter has reviewed the literature of key issues relevant to the 'aesthetics of hegemony' in the United States. These include questions of culture, political economy, persuasion and power. Despite these works speaking to the problematique of the thesis outlined in the Introduction, they all 'miss' the moment of hegemony that occurs under Sloanism.

The Frankfurt School perspectives provide a rich source of thinking about the issues of mass culture and political economy, but it has been argued that their focus on the totalizing aspects of capitalism leaves little role for subordinated social agents to make meaningful changes to their society. Furthermore, their attempts to delineate 'authentic' art from the products of the mass culture- an attribute shared by many cultural commentators- prevents an analysis of what meanings individuals might derive for *emancipatory* possibilities. In other words, by portraying almost every aspect of mass culture as a 'functional' aspect of the administered capitalist world, the reader is left with the impression that *all* culture only serves to deepen the logic of capitalism at a psychological level. There is certainly merit in this perspective- for it brings forth questions about how people apprehend their cultural environment in ways that may bring legitimacy to the system. But by dismissing the tastes of the masses and aspirations that *might be created within the structures of mass culture*, there appears almost no possibility of individual or social groups to break free or contribute to the transformation of this totalizing form of capitalism. The next chapter aims to redress this balance by arguing that the theoretical tools provided by Walter Benjamin and Raymond Williams provide more space for meaningful cultural transformation from subordinate groups- cultural transformations that subsequently affect the overall 'arc' of hegemony.

Shifting the terrain of neo-Gramscian analysis from 'Fordism' to 'Sloanism,' it has been argued, is *necessary* in order to fulfill the promise of capturing the 'hegemonic' moment. David Gartman's analysis of the history of automobile design provides some respite from the overpowering depiction of mass culture provided by the Frankfurt School. He argues that the Model T of Henry Ford represents a culmination of resistance and challenges from working and lower middle classes to turn the automobile from an elite marketed and designed product to a 'utilitarian' one. As such, one of the key symbols of the 'American Way of Life,' the

automobile, should be analysed in terms of its *design* in order to grasp its social importance. By doing this, the aesthetics of mass culture are not 'functional' aspects of capitalism, serving only to congeal and veil power relations, but the moment in which challenges and compromises between classes are 'consensualized.' However, Gartman does not address the systems of mass persuasion that might make this consensualization possible. In other words, the apparatuses through which hegemony can be formulated and articulated through- such as the media, or advertising, are not addressed. The next chapter will demonstrate that Walter Benjamin's focus on mass reproducibility in *The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction* can provide theoretical ways to conceive of the role of mass persuasion industries in this respect.

The Marxist concept of class, it has been argued, lacks the necessary fluidity to capture the dynamism of social transformation in the United States. It has been shown in this chapter that despite the presence of organized labour in the United States, 'class consciousness' has also co-existed alongside discourses of social mobility and *less* antagonistic relationships with managers and capitalists. Whilst Mike Davis' analysis explains the 'missed' opportunities for national labour organizations to have a meaningful impact on American politics, it missed the quest for mobility that the exact 'exceptional' conditions in the United States provided for the working class. As such, Davis does not interrogate the means by which working classes looked to raise their status to lower-middle or middle social classes. And like other Marxists, Davis remains anchored in a European conception of class that arbitrates 'consciousness' as a function of the deceptive qualities of capitalism. The next chapter will present the theory of Raymond Williams' as a way of addressing the cultural meanings that are generated through political-economic transformation, and how this impacts in the interplay of norms, values and interests between different social groups.

Finally, the 'deceptive' qualities of capitalist power are addressed by Bernays and Lippmann. Both of these authors, who worked in the Public Relations industries, address the emergent medias of mass persuasion and their relevance for American society. Like other commentators of their circle, they were fearful of an 'awakening' mass society. Bernays in particular outlines strategies for an 'invisible' government to maintain their power. These strategies include the mobilization of national media outlets, the use of 'fear' in order to legitimate social control, and the use of the latest fashions, styles and tastes to make ruling class interests 'popular.' These strategies appear to fulfill the idea that capitalist power is

driven from above, using art, science, technology and media to falsify consciousness amongst the masses. Yet like the other works covered in this review of literature, the ideas of Bernays and Lippmann render non-elite groups hopeless in their ability to transform or influence structures of power.

The next chapter will then outline the key theories and concepts that restore a sense of social agency to non-elite groups. Beginning with the insights of Antonio Gramsci. It will also endeavour to provide the 'aesthetic' as a more durable category in which this agency can be 'captured' by political-economic analysis of *Sloanism*.

Chapter 2
Theories and Concepts: Hegemony, Consent and Aesthetics

2.1 Introduction

This chapter establishes the key theoretical tools and concepts that will be used to analyse the processes of *hegemony* in the United States between 1900 and 1930. The previous chapter established a number of deficiencies in the key literature of this period. The following areas will be addressed in terms of *which* processes, social agents and ideas an 'aesthetic' approach to political economy can contribute to an understanding of hegemony.

Of particular importance is shifting the terms of analysis of this period from *Fordism* to *Sloanism*. The introductory chapter and review of literature (Chapter 1) establish that Sloanism differs from Fordism in placing mass consumption as *central* to the process of hegemony rather as a *corollary* to mass production as exists in Marxist literature. This shift involves placing greater emphasis on the social agents that contribute to the *style* and *design* of the consumer goods. It also therefore opens up the space for the introduction of counter-hegemonic ideas and practices, drawn particularly from artistic modernism in the early 20th century. *Sloanism* also prioritizes brand differentiation, and the ideals of upward social mobility. As such a theoretical framework of Sloanism requires a certain amount of 'fluidity' in thinking about social classes and class consciousness. This means that the *transformation* of social desires, tastes and styles is more central than the *stability* of class values, norms and interests.

Re-situating a heuristic neo-Gramscian framework in the *Sloanism* therefore requires sensitivity to the mediums of dissemination values. Integrating the role of art and culture- fundamental to the introduction of mass advertising and commodity design that Sloanism prioritises- also requires a re-reading of Gramsci to re-examine those elements of art and culture present in his writings that can contribute and fulfill the broader arc of neo-Gramscian critique. In other words, in what ways discourses and ideas- even ideologies- circulated around society, within social classes and amongst the masses. It must pay closer attention to the white collar social group as well, given that a Sloanist political-economic formation depicts this class as the most prominent constituency for politicians and business leaders alike to 'pitch' their directive roles in society towards. This chapter will demonstrate that the neo-Gramscians *do* show a sensitivity to the transforming nature of *class* and the cultural values

that can be ascribed to them at different historical junctures. But by keeping the categorization anchored in the domain of *production*, alternative or counter-hegemonic social groups *outside* the realm of the factory (in the case of workers), the attempt to draw out values and norms of non-elite becomes limited. Values and norms of the elites are *assumed* to filter down towards subordinate social groups through the pressures generated by labour-capital compromises. Outside the factory site, layers of management and the rise of bureaucratic cadres at a state level are addressed in terms similar to the 'management revolution' in the corporate world: the creation of new, specialized roles of administrative and bureaucratic middle management are depicted as functionaries of capitalist interests. The danger here is ascribing this 'bureaucratic' mentality to other social groups that also contributed to the *hegemony* of capital, such as those in the advertising industry.

As such, the neo-Gramscian framework of hegemony retains aspects of a 'base-superstructure' model of culture and political economy, with an impression given that the 'spontaneous' moment of consent occurs via a dissemination of 'norms' and 'values' from social agents at the apex of political-economic order. It *suggests*, in the vein of Gramsci, that to grasp the hegemonic moment, the interplay of values, norms and interests of different social groups should be addressed. Yet it never quite fulfills that promise. Instead, we are left with the *nebuleuse* of power, as depicted by Robert Cox, a distant constellar power of agents and institutions detached and hidden from the view of the rest of society.

In order to address this issue, theoretical tools of 'cultural' Marxists will be explained to show how this missing moment in neo-Gramscian analysis of political economy can be addressed. Firstly, the work of Antonio Gramsci will be compared to draw out the 'moment' of hegemony in cultural terms. Lukacs argued for a return to *realism* in artistic production to showcase the plight and exploitation of workers. This would address the *re-ification* of class consciousness of working classes, providing an *aesthetic* of anti-capitalist struggle from which the Communist parties of Europe could mobilize working masses. Gramsci, on the other hand, as argued by Renate Holub[130], argues the case for a 'forward-looking' cultural politics, sensitive to the idea that working classes were unlikely to be consuming the products of 'high culture' as favoured by Lukacs.

[130] Holub, Renate *Antonio Gramsci: Beyond Marxism and Postmodernism*, London: Routledge, 1992, pg. 45

The enduring relevance of Walter Benjamin's essay, *The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction* is then assessed. Benjamin's essay highlights the demise of the authenticity of the artwork under conditions of mechanical reproduction. Crucially, however, Benjamin also suggests that the very fact that cultural products are available and graspable by subordinate, non-elite groups for the first time has consequences for the socio-cultural order. Whereas before, aesthetic criterion of judgement was the preserve of a cultural elite, the mass availability of cultural artefacts and mass reproducible artwork takes *away* power from the elite. This is because the 'common man' is now free to manipulate and ascribe meaning to culture due to the system of mass reproducibility. As such the ideas of freedom and emancipation are *pre-figured* through the collapse of the old cultural order. It suggests that *political struggles can be fought in the domain of culture as well as in the 'mainstream' political arena*. In these terms, Benjamin's work is a key contribution to the idea of *Sloanism*, based as it is on a continual requirement to inject commodities and consumer goods with cultural meanings. In the United States, the cultural idea of *upward social mobility* will be of particular relevance.

In order to address this, the framework of *hegemony* outlined by Raymond Williams will show that hegemony is a contestable terrain of cultural and aesthetic values. Williams argues that the 'hegemonic moment' is a form of power in which dominant or ruling elites are influenced by 'residual' and 'emergent' cultures. These can be counter-hegemonic in nature. They can provide a new grammar of vocabulary of power for elite whilst at the same time integrating the norms and values of counter-hegemonic ideas and practices into the overall matrix of political-economic power. It requires a constant sensitivity towards previous forms of cultural order and new ones emerging from 'below.' In the context of early 20th century America, the breakdown of Victorian ideals of culture held by a 'Custodian' class is initiated by the emergence of modernism, which itself lent the styles, techniques and practices of the mass consumption industry.

2.2 Returning Gramsci to the Neo-Gramscian School

Whilst the neo-Gramscians established *hegemony* as a key concept for critical international political economy, it is important to return to the writings of Antonio Gramsci in order to extrapolate his nuanced understanding of power processes between contending social groups that showcase the important of culture, art and literature in mediating these relationships. For if hegemony helps to explain how 'large groups of people continually acquiesce to, accept and sometimes support governments- and entire social and political systems- that continually work against their interest,'[131] and we accept that the role of advertising art and dissemination through media, then we must gain a fuller understanding of how these roles are arbitrated in civil society and apprehended in culture. In other words, the distinct power of *hegemony* as a concept opens up the possibility of the acquiescence of subordinate groups being facilitated through ideas that are outside the immediate political register.

Furthermore, Gramsci's cultural writings provide insight into the role of art, theatre, literature and journalism, and the role they play in embedding certain norms and values amongst social groups. As argued earlier, the relevance of Gramsci in understanding early 20th century America lies in how ruling elites managed to gain 'consent' during a period of potential restive labour upheaval. Re-visiting Gramsci in the same period of Rupert's *Producing Hegemony* can showcase how his cultural writings as well as re-worked concepts of hegemony, historic bloc, civil society, passive revolution and the social function of the intellectual can help us more fully grasp the importance of *mass persuasion* in realising the spontaneous moment of consent outside of the immediate domain of production and representative politics. To put it a different way, Gramsci offers insights in to the nature of political-economic power as'..the concrete relations between social classes and political representation and the cultural and ideological forms in which social antagonisms are fought out or regulated and dissipated.'[132]

Gramsci wrote that 'The realization of a hegemonic apparatus , in so far as it creates a new ideological terrain , determines a reform of consciousness and of methods of knowledge : it is a fact of knowledge, a philosophical fact.'[133] The 'hegemonic apparatus,' in the early *Fordist*, according to Rupert, 'was made possible, and its contours shaped, by the development of

[131] Ives, Peter *Language and Hegemony in Gramsci*, London: Pluto Press, 2004, pg. 6
[132] Forgacs, David (ed.) *The Gramsci Reader: Selected Writings, 1916-1935*, New York: New York University Press, 2000, pg. 189
[133] Ibid., pg. 192

mass production practices and productivist ideologies.'[134] Furthermore, these contours were shaped by 'socio-political struggles…waged on a terrain defined by, the fundamentally contradictory nature of liberal capitalist social formations.'[135] Rupert's analysis showcases particular struggles waged within the site and relations of production- particularly between a more traditional unionism and an emergent set of Fordist practices that showcased a paternalistic relationship between management and workers. This issue, of attempts to mediate a relatively harmonious relationships between management and workers for a common benefitial goal, has been explored in Chapter 1. What needs to be demonstrated, however, is the role of 'common sense,'- one that Rupert identifies with 'Americanism.' The 'common sense,' of subordinate groups appears to give way to productivist ideologies rooted in the trajectory of American industrial development from the end of the Civil War onwards; and Gramsci himself appears to substantiate this as '.. Hegemony here is born in the factory and requires for its exercise only a minute quantity of professional political and ideological intermediaries'[136]

Yet this hegemony is also subjected to a dual counter-offensive, in the form of the cultural expression of higher wages, as well as the restiveness entailed by labour as a result of mechanization and de-skilling. Fordism, accordingly, requires a channeling of this restiveness and wage increase in more 'rational' ways, as '..American industrialists have understood all too well this dialectic inherent in the new industrial methods. They have understood that 'trained gorilla' is just a phrase, that 'unfortunately' the worker remains a man and even that during his work he thinks more , or at least has greater opportunities for thinking, once he has overcome the crisis of adaptation without being eliminated: and not only does the worker think, but the fact that he gets no immediate satisfaction from his work and realises that they are trying to reduce him to a trained gorilla which can lead him into a train of thought that is far from conformist"[137]

It appears then, that any spontaneous moment of consent is also *constituted* by counter-hegmeonic impulses. Rupert argues that these impulses to overcome alienation in the site of production are ultimately counter-acted within the factory site itself. Ford's sociological department, and the introduction of new layers of management to discipline and monitor the

[134] Rupert, Mark *Producing Hegemony: The Politics of Mass Production and American Global Power*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995, pg. 104
[135] Ibid., pg. 105
[136] Forgacs, David (ed.) *The Gramsci Reader: Selected Writings, 1916-1935*, New York: New York University Press, 2000, pg. 279
[137] Ibid., pg. 296

workforce are correctly understood as means of further enhancing control over workers, and over time internalzing their consent to exploitative capitalist social relations.

However, as Chapter 4 will show, this period is also one in which artists and cultural producers inspired by radical left wing ideas sought to redress this relationship. As such, it is poignant here to consider the function of the 'social intellectual,' as Gramsci saw it, to understand how culture and art form a serious domain in which counter-hegemonic practices are formed and mediated, and how any understanding of the broader arc of capitalist hegemony in that period must consider that '..the relationship between the intellectuals and the world of production is not as direct as it is with the fundamental social groups but is, in varying degrees, 'mediated' by the whole fabric of society and by the complex of superstructures, of which the intellectuals are, precisely, the 'functionaries.'[138] Furthermore, the mass persuasion industry of advertising, public relations and media, would develop styles and techniques that were commensurate with those being produced by 'intellectuals' from anarchist and socialist enclaves like Studio 291 and the Ferrer Centre. Reknowned American writers like John Dos Passos and Malcolm Cowley likewise contributed to socialist magazines such as *The New Masses*, yet found themselves also articulating particular expressions of American national identity that resonated with elite interests in a period of social and economic instability.

I argue in Chapter 5 that figures in the public relations industry like Edward Bernays were crucial in creating the linkages between a) marginalised intellectuals that were in a process of creating either an *emergent* or *counter-hegemonic* culture in their own private work, and b) advertising and public relations campaigns designed to influence politics, the economy and the spread of public information. Terry Smith shows how a photographer like Charles Sheeler- trained in the anarchist Ferrer Centre in New York- went on to imagize Ford's iconic River Rouge plant. The *iconological* aspect of hegemony is thus rooted in the ability of elite groups to appropriate cultural producers who then inscribe capitalist iconology with the styles, techniques and content derived from their counter-hegemonic training and inspiration. In commodity design- as evidenced by the influence of Bauhaus on household goods[139]- a *transnational* circulation of ideas and values began to influence the visual and popular culture of an emerging capitalist modernity in the United States. The task then is to see whether Gramsci's writings on culture can in some sense re-animate a neo-Gramscian reading of early

[138] Ibid., pg. 306

[139] Whitford, Frank *Bauhaus*, Thames and Hudson, 1984, pg. 23

20th century America with the vitality and importance of art and culture to the processes of hegemony.

David Forgacs notes that.. 'in his notes on popular culture Gramsci tends explicitly to privilege written over spoken or visual cultural forms like radio and film, even though the latte r were becoming increasingly important in the 1930s. This may be attributable in part to a widespread tendency in Italy at that period to identify culture largely with the written word."[140] It is therefore worth re-iterating that though Gramsci remained highly sensitive to developments in the United States, he brought to his writing structures of thought that were anchored in his own experience of time and place, and evades the developing processes of mass consumption, advertising and Sloanism more broadly. However, his cultural theorisation, was nonetheless sensitive to the manner in which material changes in society and economy could bring about 'a wholesale transformation of people's conceptions of the world and norms of conduct analogous in function and scale to the Protestant Reformation in the sixteenth century.'[141] Moreover, with regard to those who were capable of *producing* this wholesale transformation, Gramsci understood the decisive nature of mass production society in terms of 'the mode of being of the new intellectual can no longer consist in eloquence, which is an exterior and momentary mover of feelings and passions, but in active participation in practical life, as constructor, organizer, 'permanent persuader' and not just a simple orator.'[142] We can detect traces here, of a society being 'persuaded' by new intellectuals, constructing and organising systems of thought, and perhaps anticipating the *rational* ideals that encompassed the advertising and public relations industry in their perception and strategies for persuading an emergent mass society. What we cannot account for, however, is the role of 'feelings and passions' that likewise play a role in system of mass persuasion. A *Sloanist* framework of political-economic analysis suggests that it is precisely those 'feelings and passions' that can be inscribed into hierarchical systems of commodity marketing.

David Gartman's prioritisation of a Sloanist framework crucially suggests that the development of strategies of planned obsolescence and brand hierarchisation was in part a response by Sloan to working class American demands for access to automobiles that were marketed at an income group that was higher than their own. "If social classes do not exercise power directly but through political and cultural intermediaries, then the role of these

[140] Forgacs, David (ed.) *The Gramsci Reader: Selected Writings, 1916-1935*, New York: New York University Press, 2000, pg. 364
[141] Ibid., pg. 323
[142] Ibid., pg. 309

intermediaries - the intellectuals - in maintaining and reproducing a given economic and social order (in the exercise of hegemony) , is of decisive importance. In order for the working class to challenge that existing order, and become hegemonic in its turn without becoming dependent on intellectuals from another class , it must create 'organic' intellectuals of its own."[143]

Artists from the Ashcan School, like Robert Henri, set about dismantling the cultural hegemony of late 19th century 'Custodians' through provocative exhibitions as well as teaching his students that experimentation with form, content and materials were more important than the figurative imitations of Academy sanctioned art. We might think of cultural producers and artists like Robert Henri as social intellectuals attempting through culture to challenge the given norms and values of ruling elites and their preference for 'traditional ideas of culture.'

Yet at the same time, public relations practioners like Edward Bernays represented another kind of social intellectual, a direct auxiliary of the capitalist, who "creates alongside himself the industrial technician , the specialist in political economy , the organizer of a new culture , of a new legal system, etc."[144]

As such we can see that the spontaneous moment of hegemony does not arise simply through the directive role of elite groups, but requires us to understand the interplay of forces between social intellectuals who *are* in auxiliary service to capitalists, and those who are attempting to create a counter-hegemonic culture of resistance. These issues will become clearer in Chapters 4 and 5, where examples of both sets of social intellectuals will substantiate this claim. For now, it will be instructive to see how those practioners of public relations- social intellectuals who are [145]formed in connection with all social groups, but especially in connection with the most important social groups, and they undergo more extensive and complex elaboration in connection with the dominant social group.'

[143] Ibid., pg 300
[144] Ibid.
[145] Ibid., pg. 304

2.3 Gramsci, America and Fordism: Shifting the Terrain of Political Economy into Culture

"*The moment of hegemony involved both the consensual diffusion of a particular cultural and moral view throughout society and its interconnection with coercive functions of power*."[146]

At an early stage of the emerging mass production society in the US, writers such as Walter Lippmann and Edward Bernays showcased elite concerns about the harmful potentialities inherent in new media forms and the increased access people in everyday life would have to wide ranging national and global events. Lippmann in particular was sensitive to the idea that news reporting and public relations information (which he calls *propaganda*, at a time when the word did not carry the negative connotations of manipulation which it inherited following the Nazi and Stalinist regimes) distorted the 'true' (read: rational) nature of events and occurrences in society, instead helping to facilitate the 'pictures in mens minds' as a means of securing any meaningful understanding of society. In other words, the onset of the new mass communications age, rather than being an opportunity for an improvement in people's rational knowledge about society and thereby re-energising the quite fragile state of American democracy, was instead contributing to the deception of public, holding back key information about politics, economy and culture, and creating sublime images of American life and international society (particularly prevalent in the wartime experiences of the Spanish-American War and World War One) that were papering over the very real problems existent already, creating new problems, and exacerbating existing fault lines between different groups vying for a stake in the new wealth being generated under the aegis of Fordism. Whilst both Lippmann and Bernays remained ambivalent about subordinate social groups, Gramsci himself showed remarkable prescience in his attempt to grasp the significance of the rise of Fordism and its consequences for revolutionary potential. Adam Morton argues that for Gramsci, the 'moment of hegemony' included the function of intellectuals (and we might include cultural producers and artists as well), and the role played by their ideologies as consensual instruments of the intellectual and moral leadership in relation to material conditions:

"*An integral concept of the state is central to understanding the moment of hegemony involving leadership and the development of active consent through social relations of state-civil society.*"[147]

[146] Morton, Adam *Unravelling Gramsci: Hegemony and Passive Revolution in the Global Political Economy* London: Pluto Press, 2007, pg. 95
[147] Ibid, pg. 90.

The active reproduction of norms and values, their dissemination and the channels by which consent can be achieved, in the concrete historical period of study, is for Gramsci the relationship between state and civil society. Here, civil society is to be understood as a particular configuration that is historically rooted in the 'liberal' or 'Lockean' conception of state-society complexes, which as Van der Pijl argues is firmly rooted in the Anglo-American sphere, and solidifies in the United States *prior* to its independence from Britain. As such, the US and Britain are regarded as exemplars of the development of civil society, made possible due to particular conceptions of private property as existing in those society due to the presence of the vibrant early mercantile classes that were responsible for co-ordinating transatlantic trade, further emboldened by the Protestant settlement of the 13 colonies and the ideational structures the settlers brought with them.[148]

For the purposes of this section, 'civil society' should be conceived of as an arena or site of contestation whereby the generation and norms, values and practices can take place *without* the overbearing influence of a state (as say, in 'Hobbesian' state-society complexes). As such, it should be regarded also as a site where counter-hegemonic strategies and ideologies can take shape and re-shape those of the dominant, hegemonic classes. Raymond Williams presciently argues that the key to unlocking the moment of Gramscian hegemony in the advanced capitalist west is to attune the presence of both 'residual' and 'emergent' cultures alongside that of the hegemonic culture (which Williams labels the 'effective and dominant culture').[149] Williams believes that it was Gramsci's intention to conceive of *hegemony* as a typology of power that presupposes the existence of something which is genuinely total, not 'secondary nor superstructural in the way ideology was thought of in Marxist theory.'[150] Hegemony is something that permeates to such a depth, and saturates society to such an extent that it constitutes the 'limits of common sense,' and thus corresponds to the 'reality of social experience much more closely than any notion derived from the formula of base and superstructure.'[151]

Likewise, Gramsci believed that whilst hegemony can constitute a central system of meanings of practices, meanings and values, it is not a static system, and to understand a dominant and effective 'hegemonic' culture requires pursing the *real* social processes upon

[148] Van der Pijl, Kees *Transnational Classes and International Relations*, London: Routledge, 1998,pg. 41
[149] Williams, Raymond *Problems in Materialism and Culture: Selected Essays* London: Verso, 1980 ,pg. 39
[150] Ibid, pg. 37
[151] Ibid.

which that culture is constantly indebted to: those processes of *incorporation* and *transmission*. In other words, we must recognise in developed civil societies such as the United States, the notions of 'hegemony' and 'control' must be augmented by an understanding that subordinate, marginalised or residual cultures can be integrated into as well as re-shape the broader arc of the hegemonic process, in both the *content* of its articulation and the *style* of its dissemination.

"*...the alternative meanings and values, the alternative opinions and attitudes, even some alternative sense of the world, which can be accommodated and tolerated within a particular effective and dominant culture.*"[152]

These alternative and oppositional cultural forms can be drawn from both 'residual' and 'emergent 'cultures. Very simply, the residual cultures refer to experiences, meanings and values drawn from previous social formations that 'reside' and continue to be practices, and in some cases remain inexpressible in terms of the dominant culture. Emergent cultures on the other hand are more complicated because they suggest that new meanings and values, new significances and experiences are constantly being created *within* the dominant culture. Gramsci's allusion was to suggest that in societies with a developed civil society, 'there is an earlier attempt to incorporate them [emergent cultures], just because they are a part- and yet not a defined part- of effective contemporary practice.' As such, at any given point within civil society, the hegemonic culture is in an antagonistic but practical contestation with both residual cultures that tie it to the past, and emergent cultures that suggest or predict future social formations; and both residual and emergent cultures suffer varying degrees of incorporation.

As the next chapter will demonstrate, the United States under conditions of emergent Fordist political economy as well as the expansion of new media forms, was situated in an ideal position for the leading political-economic elites to incorporate and absorb both the residual 19th century culture of the formerly dominant Custodian class as well as emergent cultures from younger social actors, though often drawn from the same class, were fractured by inter-generational conflicts over cultural meanings in a number of domains including art, historiography, the role of women and African-Americans. The 'gilded age,' as John Dos Passos demonstrates throughout his writing (most notably in *Manhattan Transfer and The 42nd Parallel*) foreshadowed trends such as greater acceptance of marginalised African-

[152] Ibid, pg.39

American culture, increased familiarisation (and disturbance) of new and unique metropolitan cultures, whilst simultaneously incorporating the cultural conservatism and 'self-made' ethics of the Custodian era.

In any case, Gramsci's key contribution was to highlight avenues through which the leading political-economic classes could mobilise new techniques to grasp more coherently 'emergent cultures,' particularly of the working classes. His research into Ford's sociological department and the efforts taken to 'de-sexualise' workers and engineer a productivity-orientated consensus amongst them is just one of many avenues that became opened up during the early 20th century in America through which a precarious hegemony could continue to be exercised in the face of widespread demographic and cultural transformation. The next section will argue that as a result of the rise of new media coupled with the 'incorporation' of modernist art and ideas, we can theorise the process of hegemony, control, and more broadly the transformation of capitalist social relations in terms of Aesthetics.

2.4 The 'Space' for Aesthetics

Aesthetics should be considered centrally to the neo-Gramscian notion of hegemony, as it offers a dialectic portal for interrogating the very 'norms' and 'values' that supposedly anchor dominant social formations and the elite power that lays behind it. It glimpses (or 'refracts') power not as an definitive, organized structure through which we can discern the values and norms of leading or dominant social groups within that structure, but rather as a *totality* whose depth permeates social relations to such an extent that it sets the limits of 'common sense,' and the parameters of discourses related to social transformation and/or revolution. In other words, by providing theoretical and epistemological space for the role of emotion, sentiment, the arbitration of culture and arts during periods of economic rationalization and socio-cultural transformation (as is the case with the United States between 1900 and 1930), we may more fully realise the importance of residual and emergent cultures that are either counter-hegemonic or radical in their *form* and/or *content*.

Precisely because *aesthetics* is necessarily involved with the articulation and appraisal of ideas of beauty, sublimity, revulsion and disgust, this chapter aims to demonstrate that understandings of the key ideas of *progress* and *civilization*, have from the mid-19th century onwards been articulated either implicitly or overtly as characterisations of the *society and*

economic system that produces a particular culture. This perspective is seen at first most clearly in the work of John Ruskin and William Morris in Britain during the mid to late Victorian period, who argued for the harnessing of modern, industrial, machine-led production by working classes in order to both i) recover the sense of loss of craftsmanship and artisanal input brought about by technological innovation and de-skilling and ii) create an ideal-type society through proper *design*. It is these twin-set of concerns- recovering the role of the working man and restoring a sense of dignity and pride to his labour *and* mobilising the technological developments in industry to create, produce and design an ideal, 'beautiful' society that lay at the heart of a succession of *transnationally* anchored art-in-industry movements from the late 19th century. The *Art Workers Guild* established in 1884 in Britain, followed by the *The Society for Arts and Crafts* (1897) in the United States and the *Deutsche Werkbund* (1907) were such organizations that primarily focused on handicrafts and architecture, and were all heavily influenced by the work of Ruskin and Morris, and are all considered forerunners to the Bauhaus School, who under the leadership of Walter Gropius initiated a more politically-charged project to work on the concept of design unity- unity of form and function. Furthermore, these organizations and the ideas they fostered were reactions against the over-ornamentation of late Victorian handicrafts, associating it the crass materialism and 'conspicuous' consumption of that period. As such, the overall legacy of 'art-in-industry' and the critical contemplations and design projects of these sometimes radical practioners was to elevate the *form* of cultural artefacts and their design/production process as potential arbiters of social relations during a period of intense political-economic transformations in advanced Western capitalist societies of the time; transformations that reflected both the advancement of industrial planning as well as the increasingly fractured social or class relationships that underpinned them.

In what ways, then, is capturing culture an important arbiter of social relations? In the context of early 20th century United States, the thesis is fundamentally arguing that social relationships were arbitrated in an aesthetic manner that sat *alongside* as well as bypassed seemingly more orthodox means of class control.

The neo-Gramscian theorization of this process, as I have outlined in section 1 of this chapter, makes clear that the Fordist political-economic complex was based on a series of compromises and concessions between capital and labour resolved *internally* in the production process itself. That is to say, the long path to full mechanization and completely

standardized, interchangeable production witnessed a gradual de-skilling of the worker, whose alienation was to be compensated by increased wages and access to the rising mass consumption marketplace. In this way, American capitalist leaders, manifested most obviously in the figure of Henry Ford, successfully controlled antagonistic class conflict already present in the United States since the 1860s (before the onset of the Great Depression. The consolidating model of controlling class conflict pioneered by Henry Ford would then go onto become a cornerstone of Franklin Roosevelt's New Deal Programme which also more fervently embraced on a national-scale the kind of industrial planning associated with the developments made at the River Rouge plant[153]. As such, *hegemony* in this respect appears to operate as a well negotiated consensus between capital and labour, with disruption and conflict further ameliorated through institutions such as Ford's sociological department to monitor worker's behaviour and condition.

However, another crucial aspect of the emerging Fordist Political Economy was the growth of mass consumption as an increasingly everyday phenomenon for white collar social groups in the United States. The maintenance and expansion of this marketplace can be intuitively explained by the growth of both advertising and public relations- and the rise of mass persuasion complex that intertwined the creative and artistic fashioning of national advertising with developments in broadcast and print media. In order for this process to unravel successfully, David Gartman argues that an *aesthetic* dimension should be appraised, in other words the search, in political-economic terms, of those forces that *galvanized* the mass consumption market, what made it a culturally legitimate site of playing out class antagonisms and achieving perceived socio-cultural advances.[154] In particular, the idea of achieving *social mobility*, became synonymous with an *aspirational materialism* that celebrated emulative consumption as an aesthetic measure of individuals or families (or even whole groups) ability to rise through that ladder of mobility. The following chapter will deal in more detail about the shifts in the class structure in American Society concomitous to the rise of Fordism that fostered this sense of aspirational materialism, in particular the numerical rise of the 'White Collar'; a perceived social group whose occupational roles (mainly taking their places in the lower and middle sections of the managerial hierarchy that accompanied the Taylorist and Fordist transformations), who were thought to hold the 'average' values and

[153] Smith, Terry *Making the Modern: Industry, Art and Design in America,* Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993, pg. 4
[154] Gartman, David *Auto Opium: A Social History of Automobile Design*, London: Routledge, 1994, pg. 10

interests of the ordinary American citizen. Their 'demands' in the marketplace for more accessible and cheaper household goods that in the mid to late 19th century would have been considered luxury items reserved for the consumption of the 'leisure classes,' are seen to 'enact' the process of both modern advertising and political-economic public relations

2.5 The Lineage of Marxist Aesthetics: Lukacs and Gramsci

"*The construction of the aesthetic artefact is inseparable from the construction of the dominant ideological forms of modern class society, and indeed from the whole new form of human subjectivity appropriate to that social order*."[155]

Marxist theorisation and critique of *aesthetics* begins in earnest with the publication of Georg Lukacs' *Theory of the Novel* (1920) and *History and Class Consciousness* (1923). In these texts, Lukacs had two primary theoretical goals; firstly, to galvanise the Marxist analysis of culture, its relation to the transformations in production and the social relations of production, and the way in which culture could be used to embed the political-economic project of ascendant bourgeois groups; and secondly, to organise a theoretical perspective of aesthetics that could 'characterise the constitution of particular relationships between the truth of artwork and *falsity* of everyday thinking.'[156] As such, it should be noted that Lukacs' theory *a priori* assumed that the socio-economic conditions of capitalism generated a false consciousness amongst working class individuals, and impacted detrimentally on their ideational and organisational capabilities as the revolutionary subject of socialism. In the context of the perceived 'failure' of Communist Party-led revolution in the advanced industrial Western European countries during the crisis years of the First World War, Lukacs' theory can be read as an attempt to mobilise hitherto unheralded sections of society into the project of re-invigorating the Western European revolution. Specifically, Lukacs elucidates on the potential role that artists and writers could play in re-orientating the consciousness of working class groups *back* towards revolutionary ideals, as opposed to the acquiescence to the bourgeois nation-state that had been demonstrated throughout the First World War.[157]

This, I would argue, is the first key Marxist elucidation of the role of culture and the arts in social revolution *after* the effects of industrial modernization (to put Fordism in a different

[155] Eagleton, Terry *The Ideology of the Aesthetic*, Oxford: Blackwell, 1990, pg. 3
[156] Johnson, Pauline *Marxist Aesthetics: The Foundations Within Everyday Life For an Emancipated Consciousness*, R.K.P, 1984, pg.1-4
[157] Ibid., pg 12

way) could be ascertained first hand in the context of the brutality of the mechanized First World War.[158] For the purposes of this theory chapter, Lukacs' key contribution was to elevate the role of artists and social agents involved in the creative industries in terms of what *kind* (i.e., form) of art and cultural artefacts should be produced in order to transform the false consciousness of working class individuals and groups. As such, it highlights the agency of social groups *outside* those that appear to have a more direct interest in the maintenance of the capitalist system. What Lukacs *does not* confront, however, are indeed the very values and norms that these cultural producers would bring with them in terms of transcending the 'false consciousness of everyday thinking'; rather, his specific contribution was to advise the writers of the period to embrace the literary realism of mid-to-late 19th century authors. Lukacs rejected the modernist art and literature of the 1920s because he believed it incapable of artistically reproducing the total view of the tensions and contradictions accompanying the teleologically necessary transformation from one society to another. With the modernist focus on the shock of the new and the breakdown of the old order, Lukacs advocated a judgement of literary texts that could evoke or mirror-image the struggles of society:

"*Authentic literature…is that which reproduces the essentials of reality, which for Lukacs, in the twentieth century, means the decline of capitalism and the class that carried it forwards, the bourgeoisie, and by inference, and of necessity, the rise of an emergent world historical class, the proletariat.*"[159]

Nevertheless, Lukacs opened up a number of concerns- the issue of *re-ification*, the fetishized consciousness of 'everyday thinking' and the subject's false reflection of reality that can only be overturned (or politically challenged) through the 'truth' content of the artwork that directly contrasts that falsity through a 'totalizing perspective that draws *essence* and *appearance* into a unity.'[160] These concerns together addressed what a number of Marxist and critical theorists would subsequently interrogate: the *representation* of reality as it appears at the social surface. At stake, according to Lukacs, was the manner in which class relationships could appear as 'normal,' at the 'surface level,' and particularly how the *leading* or dominant classes could articulate their capitalist power interests as interests of the general society. Moreover, the *ability* of leading elites to create and maintain a politico-ideological

[158] Both Marx and Engels wrote about the relationship between the economic base and political-ideological superstructure, and though often misinterpreted as a causal relationship where transformations in the means and relations of production witnessed conterminous changes in the political-ideological superstructure. See Williams, Raymond *Problems in Materalism and Culture: Selected Essays*, London: Verso, 1980.
[159] Holub, Renate *Antonio Gramsci: Beyond Marxism and Postmodernism*, London: Routledge, 1992, pg. 8
[160] Johnson, Pauline *Marxist Aesthetics: The Foundations Within Everyday Life For an Emancipated Consciousness*, R.K.P, 1984, pg. 26

representation that falsifies working class consciousness (and thus articulate their interests as general interests) is transferred to the domain of culture, and the production of artworks and cultural artefacts.[161] *History and Class Consciousness*, then, can stand not only as a theoretical elucidation on the role of culture and art in socialist revolution, but also as a statement of praxis, almost a 'call to arms' to the artists and cultural producers of the day to use their talent and creative intuition in *artistic reflection* to 'totalise the essence and appearance to expose the fundamentally distortive nature of the fetishized appearance,'[162] and adhere to principles of literary realism which allow the 'pertinent preconditions and motivations out of which the consciousness of the characters arises and develops.'[163]

Whilst this thesis does not interrogate the modernist literature of early 20th century America, the 'cultural objects' in focus that were produced by the advertising and public relations nexus have been described by Michael Schudson as broadly following the tenents of 'capitalist realism,'[164] an *idealized* and *stylized* depiction of everyday life, that through analysis of people's fears and insecurities in their daily habitat, re-created a vision of American life *in the way it ought to be*.[165] In relation to Lukacs' advocation of art that depicted the reality of working class life and a perspective that would unravel the re-ified class power relationships of hierarchically organised bourgeois capitalist society, the 'capitalist realism' developing in the American Advertising industry tended to focus on the key demographic and occupational backgrounds that were presumed to 'carry in their values and aspirations the mass way of American life.'[166] As such, I would argue that whilst the focus of Lukacs' realism was the *consolidation* and political organization of working classes (through a new consciousness that eclipses the re-ified, surface level manifestation of capitalist power relations), the capitalist realist aesthetic developing in the advertising industry focused on the *emulative* aspirations of an emergent white collar, lower-middle class

[161] Lukacs, Georg *History and Class Consciousness*, London: The Merlin Press Ltd, 1971, pg. 50
[162] Johnson, Pauline *Marxist Aesthetics: The Foundations Within Everyday Life For an Emancipated Consciousness*, R.K.P, 1984, pg. 27
[163] Ibid.
[164] Schudson, Michael *Advertising, the Uneasy Persuasion: Its Dubious Impact on American Society*, Basic Books, 1984, pg. 34
[165] Marchand, Roland *Advertising the American Dream: Making Way for Modernity, 1920-1940* Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985, pg. 44
[166] Wright Mills, C *White Collar: The American Middle Classes* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002, pg. 5

demographic whose unique place at the time was to be both scorned by traditional working classes and often mocked by the pre-existent upper-middle and elite classes.[167]

Siegfried Kracauer makes a similar observation about white collar workers in Weimar Germany- the 'salaried masses,'[168] with no traditional political party representing their as yet undefined interests, rejecting the contemporaneous organized working class (in both radical and conservative trade unions) as well as being *rejected by* the pre-existent middle classes. Kracauer's unique 'montage' of these office-based workers in Germany highlights a number of key issues that would become central to *The Culture Industry* thesis of Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer, such as their political and cultural 'homelessness,' their sense of drift, lurking anxieties (which remained unexplored during his period of study), but most importantly their susceptibility to what he deems 'distraction industries,'; the cinema theatre, kitsch novels, and household department stores.[169]

So whilst Lukacs believed a *return* to the tenents of literary realism would transform the re-ified consciousness of the working masses, he failed to confront the actual social class or group that was *coming into being*- the white collar lower-middle classes- and how they might receive and interpret such realism. In the case of the United States, the aesthetic of capitalist realism instead fostered the sense of emulation and aspirational materialism that would be advertised as the 'American Dream.' A dream it might still remain, but crucially by integrating the very real and lived desire of lower-middle classes to ascend the ladder of social mobility[170] into the imagization of early 20th century American life, the artists and writers of the time *provided* the techniques and styles that underpinned the aesthetic of capitalist realism. As such, the Lukacsian account of Marxist aesthetics, concerned as it is with the production of artworks, and *primarily the content of artworks*, fails to address the reception of artwork, alternative meanings that might be discerned from them, or indeed how antagonistic ideals drawn from residual or emergent cultural values might co-exist or even combine with each other to aesthetically embody individuals' or groups' *political aspirations*. As I will argue in the next chapter that primarily those political aspirations in the United

[167] Ibid., pg. 16

[168] Kracauer, Siegfried *The Salaried Masses: Duty and Distraction in Weimar Germany*, London: Verso, 1998, pg. 11

[169] Ibid., pg. 18

[170] As David Gartman demonstrates throughout *Auto Opium: A Social History of Automobile Design*, (London: Routledge, 1994

States were more concerned with *mobility* rather than *class* consolidation[171] and in this sense both Gramsci and Benjamin provide a less structured but more intuitive and creative way of thinking about the role of art and culture during the era of mass production. Whereas Lukacs rejected Modernism, Gramsci shared with modernist artist the concern of how artworks and cultural artefacts are received. I will argue in the next section of the his chapter that Benjamin extended this even further, but for now it is worth engaging with Gramsci's own thoughts.

Firstly, Gramsci grounded his analyses in the context of the gradually diminishing role of artisanal and skilled producers and the rise of replaceable, unskilled mass production through machine technology. Renate Holub argues that Gramsci believed that Lukacs' focus on 'high literature,' as a means of transforming revolutionary consciousness and the role of writers in their historic role in the world revolution was missing the point and uniqueness of the early Fordist period; the writers Lukacs would have adhering to literary realism would not be read by the disadvantaged social classes in any case, and the proletariat as it existed in the early 20th century were already showing a preference for serialized novels, trivial literature, pop novels, detective novels, and 'kitsch in general.'[172]

"*In an era that increasingly facilitates the reproducibility of literary and cultural texts, and thus the mobilization of systems of signification in the individual act of reading, Lukacs' concern with a realistic, denotative depiction of reality, with its positing of a consuming rather than meaning-producing reader, seem not ahead but behind the times.*"[173]

As with Raymond Williams, both Gramsci and Lukacs- and the Frankfurt School- aimed at re-established a genuine sense of dialectical interplay between the base of economic relations of production, and the superstructure of the social relations of production. Questions of 'culture' had figured somewhat evasively in the Marxist canon, with many writers relegating the role and production of culture as a consequential manifestation of whatever the economic base required for its reproduction over time. The differences for Holub are that Lukacs organises his thoughts on realism and modernism as a part of an 'overall philosophical and aesthetic system.' Gramsci on the other hand, approached the literary sphere as a part of an overall project and *in relation to it*- a 'philosophy on praxis.' At a more basic level, Lukacs

[171] Though of couse this is not to discredit or ignore the very real presence of organized working class movements in the US, nor the Progressive movement who in some way can be thought of as an elite-anchored movement that campaigned (often discordantly) for widespread social reforms on behalf of the working class.
[172] Holub, Renate *Antonio Gramsci: Beyond Marxism and Postmodernism*, London: Routledge, 1992, pg. 9
[173] Ibid., pg. 64

dogmatic, though well meaning concerns about underscoring the revolutionary or transformatory potential of literacy realism appears as a conservative approach, assuming familiarity with a canon that was established during the era of high national romanticism and broadly focused on bourgeois society and its agents. Lukacs ultimately set out to write a definitive theory of Marxist aesthetics, whereas I think Gramsci is more attuned to the relationship between aesthetics and culture and political economic transformation. More importantly, he perceived the problem that arises in *conceptualising* this relationship as an active process, where cultural matters and leitmotifs that are mobilised to bring about a heuristic apparatus of praxis are in danger of already being redundant in the social sphere, either through absorption into the hegemonic norms of the time, distortion through that same process or engagement with groups, and finally being excised altogether. As such, I believe Gramsci envisioned a form of political economy and state power that was a careful mediation between the pressures being generated 'from below' (that is, the economic configurations of production) and the multifaceted cultural context, where the realms of ideas, ideologies, art, tradition and international cultural influence co-existed and shaped new meanings. This interplay is a vital step forward from previous Marxist attempts to grasp the cultural question, and removes the inertia of *hegemonic* power as conceived in the Coxian sense, which appears to manifest 'from above,' and distilled through a variety of ideational and institutional branches into a consensus-forming structure of social relations from which there appears little or no room for antagonistic or counter-hegemonic social agents 'from below' to transform those consensus forming structures.

2.6 The Relevance of Walter Benjamin

"*In 'The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction (1935)' Benjamin suggests that the end of the particularly rich forms of experience that inform the works of Goethe, Marx etc., actually signifies the possible advent of revolutionary radical political change. This is because in the age of mechanical reproduction works of art do not need to be performed live or experienced as unique and original*."[174]

The loss of 'aura,' and the termination of the an authentic experience of artwork forms the bases of Benjamin's essay *The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction*, and similar to the position of Marcuse, points to 'aesthetics as a form of noninstrumental cognition.'[175] Accordingly, Benjamin believes that the *mode of reception* under conditions of

[174]Schecter, Darrow *The History of the Left from Marx to the Present: Theoretical Perspectives*, New York: Continuum, 2007, pg. 89
[175] Ibid, pg 88

mechanical reproduction opens up the possibility- a unique historic moment- that the 'weight of tradition,' becomes transformed, and begins to sever the relationship between the cultural elite and the masses. Denoting a transfer from authentic experience to the 'shock,' Darrow Schecter argues that for 'Benjamin it is a shock accompanied by realisation that humanity has entered into a phase where hierarchy is no longer the necessary price of survival.'[176]

There is revolutionary poignancy of Benjamin's analysis for the *potential* of the masses to overthrow the weight of history. When we consider how this might apply in the United States, it is important to note that in a society where the *discursive strength* of the idea that the nation was *born* by throwing off the shackles of class domination and traditional hierarchy,[177]the ideals of political emancipation- 'rights of franchise, expression, assembly and representation,'[178] and therefore the *terrain* of political-economic contestation itself must be considered according to the historic formation of American society. Whilst Benjamin's idea that 'adaptation of human perception to industrial modes of production and transportation, especially the radical reconstruction of spatial and temporal relations,'[179] may strike resonance in *all* societies undergoing the modernizing transformations of the early 20th century, the specificity of the American experience lies in the differentially *articulated* class relationships that developed during the course of the 19th century. As such the 'democratization of expertise which upsets the traditional hierarchy between author and reader/viewer,'[180] that is initiated by systems of mass reproducibility in the arena of culture and visual arts may indeed transform the experience of artworks into a 'shock,' but in the United States this shock is accompanied by a moulding of culture into precisely the 'democratic' form that had been the promise of American history.[181] The images produced and reproduced during this period were of course not just the artefacts of 'high culture,' but a range of new forms from cartoon strips, photojournals and advertising tableaux that infused modernist styles and techniques with a cross-section of pre-existent 'fables of abundance,'

[176] Ibid, pg. 89
[177] I stress here 'discursive strength,' to point out that the strength of democratic ideals for white adult males in the United States produced a different *form* of struggle of working classes in the 19th century compared to white adult working males in Europe. Mike Davis' *Prisoners of the American Dream*.
[178]Schecter, Darrow *The History of the Left from Marx to the Present: Theoretical Perspectives*, New York: Continuum, 2007 , pg. 72
[179] Wolin, Richard 'Experience and Materialism in Benjamin's *Passagenwerk*,' in Gary Smith (ed.) *Benjamin: Philosophy, Aesthetics, History*, Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1989, pg. 3
[180] Benjamin, Walter *Illuminations*, London: Pimlico, 1999, pg. 219
[181] *No Place of Grace: Antimodernism and the Transformation of American Culture, 1880-1920*, Jackson Lears, pg. 25

that reinforced the idea that economic scarcity had been transcended.[182] Furthermore, the very upsetting of traditional hierarchies taking place *within* the relationship of producer and viewer had their counterpart in the breakdown of cultural hierarchies between the Custodian espousal of Western European, academy-trained and anointed artistic styles and the Modernist/Avant-garde onslaught that disrupted the cultural hegemony of the Custodians at a national level following the Armoury Show of 1913.[183]

As such the resonance of Benjamin's idea that reproducibility of art and culture for the study of hegemony in political economy is not so much the transforming relationship between producer and viewer itself, but the implications this has for the social agents' *comprehension* of the social and political-economic system itself. In its most emancipatory rendering, 'Benjamin's acute sensitivity to the political possibilities offered in periods of historical transition,' and his rejection of 'historicist notions of linear time in favour of a messianic vision of time in which moments of truth from the past, present and future are distilled and intersect,'[184] showcases a surprising theoretical concomitance with the unfolding practices of a Sloanist political-economic formation in which the rise of a complex of mass persuasion issues particular creative industries such as advertising the task of producing and designing the images necessary to cultivate the emulative and aspirational values amongst the public. These images drew in both style and content from 19th century American discourses of abundance and prioritised a vision of the American as independent, in control of their destiny, and imbued with the 'pioneer spirit' of the hard-working, fearless and 'straight-talking' characters that carried out the taming of the continent and the *manifest destiny* of white, Anglo-Saxon Protestant settlers.[185] Yet they were also infused with a sensibility of modern, consumption-orientated capitalist values, correlating the social desire for economic mobility with a vision of commodity accumulation and stylistic emulation with an 'authentic' American culture.[186] Finally, the techniques and styles mobilised to galvanise the *imagization* itself were borrowed from early, experimental modernist and avant-garde artists, whose focus

[182]Lears, Jackson *Fables of Abundance: A Cultural History of Advertising in America*, Basic Books, 1995, pg. 111
[183] Antliff, Alan *Anarchist Modernism: Art, Politics, and the First American Avant-Garde,* Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2001, pg. 6
[184]Schecter, Darrow *The History of the Left from Marx to the Present: Theoretical Perspectives*, New York: Continuum, 2007, pg. 90
[185] Carroll, Peter and Noble, David *The Free and the Unfree: A New History of the United States*, London: Penguin, 1977, pg. 65
[186] Coben, Stanley *Rebellion Against Victorianism: The Impetus for Cultural Change in 1920s America*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991, pg. 226

on 'shock,' individuality and freedom from cultural hierarchy both socially *legitimized* the expansion of market values.[187] Here we therefore witness a tripartite 'integration' from the past, present and future in the *iconology* of a Sloanist society, which as Benjamin poignantly elucidates:

"*In the dialectical image, the pastness of a particular epoch is always also "things as they always have been." As such, though, at times it comes into view only at a very specific epoch: that is, the epoch in which humanity, rubbing its eyes, suddenly recognizes the dream image as such. It is at that point that the historian takes on the task of dream interpretation*."[188]

So for Benjamin, this period of mass reproducibility, the 'opening' up of culture, its availability to the masses, and the variety of *potential* different meanings they might derive from this new world is akin to waking up from a dream, to be confronted only by a series of dream like 'dialectical images,' that confront the memory of the past and the chaos of the present simultaneously, allowing the residual values and ideas of the past to co-exist, no matter how antagonistically, with those values of the present and the intimations of the future:

"*It isn't that the past casts its light on the present or the present casts its light on the past: rather, an image is that in which the Then and the Now come into a constellation like a flash of lightning. In other words: image is dialectics at a standstill. For while the relation of the present to the past is a purely temporal, continuous one, the relation of the Then and the Now is dialectical- not development but image, leaping forth*."[189]

It is important to note however a common thread that runs through Lukacs, Gramsci and Benjamin; that is the subject of 'emancipation,' the working classes, remain for them rooted in the *consolidating* model of class that was particular to the experience of Western European working class movements. That is to say, the terms of 'progress,' for this class remain straight-jacketed in a conception of social hierarchies in which 'freedom,' and 'emancipation,' requires an overthrow of the prevailing system, preferably for Lukacs and Gramsci under the guise of a Communist Party.[190] The values of this organized political agency are *assumed* to be counter-hegemonic, without confronting the potentiality of those values changing other than *being subjected to the re-ified value of the culture industry*. They

[187] Cooper, John Xiros *Modernism and the Culture of Market Society*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004, pg. 8
[188] "RE: The Theory of Knowledge, Theory of Progress," Walter Benjamin, in *Benjamin: Philosophy, Aestetics, History*, Gary Smith (ed.), pg. 52
[189] Ibid, pg. 49
[190] Schecter, Darrow *The History of the Left from Marx to the Present: Theoretical Perspectives*, New York: Continuum, 2007, pg. 155

do not confront how the mass reproducibility of art may impact on the emergent white collar classes, nor particularly what the *mediums* of this reproducibility might lend to the maintenance of power. What Benjamin does offer, however, is the way in which potentially antagonistic ideals of culture and art can be reconciled in the 'dialectical' image and how people could derive new meanings- even a new language of social transformation through this process:

"*The creative process...consists of an unconscious animation of the archetype and of its elaboration into a complete work. The shaping of the original image is to some extent a translation of it into the language of the present..Therein lies the social significance of art...it brings those forms to the surface, that the spirit of the age most lacked. The nostalgia of the artist retreats from dissatisfaction with the present until it reached that primal image in the unconscious that serves...to compensate for..the one-sidedness of the spirit of the age. His nostalgia seizes upon the image, and as he brings it..into consciousness, the image changes its shape until it can be adapted by contemporary man to his own context*."[191]

In this way, the 'common' man is free to manipulate and imbue with meaning the images he now has access to in a system of mass reproducibility.[192] What I would like to stress here however, is the potential reading of artworks *alongside* a dominant culture that in the early 20th century appeared to be drifting rapidly towards those of what the Frankfurt School would deem as 'instrumental,'- that is the increasingly rationalized and mechanized system of production and its ancillary counterparts in the managerial revolution (bringing specialization and compartmentalization of knowledge) and the social sciences. Critical theories of political economy tend therefore to surmise these rationalizing tendencies as exemplar forms of social and political-economic control. The departure point for this thesis is that those processes were also dialectically rendered through an *aestheticization* of the political-economic system that maintained its viability and legitimacy through the creation of an iconology that celebrated values that were *not necessarily* the pecuniary, accumulative values of the dominant capitalist classes. Rather, the transforming social structure of the United States- particularly the rise of a numerically dominant white collar social group as well as those drawn from elites who were more at ease with the 'beat and tempo of modernity' than their parents- witnessed an

[191] "RE: The Theory of Knowledge, Theory of Progress," Walter Benjamin, in *Benjamin: Philosophy, Aesthetics, History*, Gary Smith (ed.), pg. 61

[192] Max Baym argues in *A History of Literary Aesthetics in America* (1973) , that the 19th century 'vernacular' tradition pioneered by writers like James Fenimore Cooper insisted on circumventing the norms and values of the ruling classes, giving rise to a literature and arts that while not appreciated as comparable to Western European cultureal output of the same period, nevertheless produced an 'American mind,' that allowed readers, listeners and viewers to derive meaning from art and culture as they saw fit for their circumstances- this is particular true of the pioneer/settler mentality of the Westward expansion.

intersection of contending ideas and values, broadly implicated in the responses to modernization and urbanization; some of the more politically charged groups (such as the 'anarchist' modernists of Studio 291 and the Ferrer Centre as I will show in Chapter 4) even articulated their responses in terms of a critique of capitalism itself.[193]

In this way, it is useful to turn to the thought of Raymond Williams. Williams reflects on hegemony as process of power so deep and inescapable, one that sets the limits of 'common sense.' However, as with Benjamin, they both recognize the *political and social* potentials opened up by new forms of artistic and cultural practices, that the idea of 'common sense' itself is under a permanent stress of being overcome. Williams is also more specific about the way in which we can understand this process through a re-configuration of the way in which cultural values intertwine with changing structures of social hierarchy. By identifying the existence of 'residual' and 'emergent' cultures alongside that of the seemingly dominant, he shows that the mutual interplay of these values affect and re-articulate one and another. I would go one step further and suggest at a unique juncture of political-economic history- the rise of Sloanism in the United States- the *hegemony* of a ruling class did not rest solely upon the carrying through of their dictats and creating a broad consensus within society through rationalized manipulation of mass persuasion complex, but rather the way in which discordant and sometimes oppositional values from social groups and classes *outside* the dominant came to affect that hegemony. Furthermore, this process helped to both articulate and legitimate what both C. Wright Mills and David Gartman have identified as a desire for mobility that emanated from the working classes and lower-middle classes. Finally, the rise of the mass persuasion complex itself, with a mixture of highly instrumentalized Public Relations campaigns, technical developments in media on the one hand, and a celebration of the 'new' and 'modern' through the integration of modernist artistic movements and focus on fashion-styles and individual tastes witness an intertwining of the supposedly 'rational' transformation based on calculation, planning and utility-based decision making and a highly sentimentalized, emotive aesthetic based on particular expression and judgments on fear, disgust and beauty.

[193] Stromquist, Shelton *Reinventing "The People": The Progressive Movement, The Class Problem and the Origins of Modern Liberalism*, Chicago: University of Illinois, 2006, pg. 32

2.7 Raymond Williams: Re-configuring Agency in *Hegemony*

If Benjamin's key contribution to the theoretical framework of this thesis is the way in which mass reproducibility severs traditional cultural hierarchies in favour of a *potentially* new phase of human political history (one in which the *terms of emancipation and progress are derived through the 'shock' of cultural liberation*), Raymond Williams' appropriation of the Gramscian notion of hegemony allows us to take a closer inspection at the manner in which 'values' and 'norms' are arbitrated by different social groups. His heuristic framework appears on the surface quite simple and intuitively obvious, yet as I am arguing for this thesis, it holds a particular resonance for the way in which critical IPE analyses the processes involved in the *legitimization* of power in political-economic formations, and the classes that issue dominance over others through consensus creation. Whilst the Frankfurt School appear to maintain (without confronting the issue directly) that this consensus is maintained through a totalization of the culture industry and instrumentalization of all aspects of knowledge, Williams offers a more nuanced approach that includes the real, lived practices and ideas of counter-hegemonic groups in the creation of that consensus, subsequently altering the configuration of the norms, values and socio-cultural attitudes of the 'hegemon.'

To begin with, Williams understands hegemony as something that is genuinely total, rather than secondary or superstructural; furthermore, the idea of hegemony as deeply saturating the consciousness of society goes beyond the notion of totality in the sense that it emphasises the facts and practices of domination, allowing theory and practice to rescue the notion of human social agency.[194] In this sense, a theorist of hegemony needs to be fully attuned to the rate and experience of *social change*- to detect those forms and practices that contribute to the 'saturating' of individual and collective consciousnesses. For Williams, the failures of Marxist cultural theory reflect an epistemological focus on *epochal* questions rather than *historical* ones, meaning the drive of cultural theorization in Marxist and Critical theory focuses on main 'transition' points (say, from the feudal to capitalism, or Fordist to Post-Fordist). In this way, Williams argues that Marxist cultural theory has been left bereft of how different 'moments' in these phases transform the architectures of power. Furthermore, epochal focused theorization gives no weight to how the values or norms of leading or dominant classes transform themselves in a non-instrumental way (i.e., what values are suited

[194] Williams, Raymond *Problems in Materialism and Culture: Selected Essays*, London: Verso, 1980 pg. 37

best to continue the over-arching project of deepening and extending capitalist social relations).[195]

Williams' reconstruction of hegemony begins with identifying a 'central system of practices, meanings and values,' that are *effective* enough to resist complete overhauling:

"*It is a set of meanings and values which as they are experiences as practices appears as reciprocally confirming. It thus constitutes a sense of reality for most people in society, a sense of absolute because experiences reality beyond which it is very difficult for most members of the society to move, in most areas of their lives.*"[196]

However, this 'central system' is not static, and we can only actually understand the dominant and effective culture if we understand the *real* social process upon which it is constantly indebted to; the process of *incorporation*. The education system is regarded as the key agency of the 'transmission' of a dominant culture, embedding norms from an early age. At a theoretical and historical level, this process is facilitated by the *selective tradition*; that which within the terms of an effective dominant culture is passed off as 'the tradition,' 'the significant past.'[197] Here, the *selectivity* itself is the point. We might think of it as akin to the editing process in 20th century media, the ability to conceal information, ideas, facts, different visions, rendering only what can be seen as significant or real.

Thus, from an entire spatio-temporal area of past and present, certain meanings and practices are allowed emphasis and celebration; others are negated, neglected or excluded. Even those which are carried through to attain contemporary significance are subject to the reinterpretation and dilution of the dominant culture, to the extent that they support or at least not contradict that culture. The 'effective and dominant' culture that Williams speaks of, then, are the terms and conditions of the *Hegemon*, but should be understood primarily as in a perpetual state of transformation and re-shaping. Whilst it provides the lexicon of what is possible in the realm of 'common sense,' it must also be sensitive to emergent and residual cultures that provide its antagonisms and contradictions. What is important to understand is that it is *not* an imposed ideology- for if it were, it might be more easily identifiable and easy to throw off its shackles. As *hegemony* is continually active and adjusting, as it reaches,

[195] Ibid.
[196] Ibid., pg 38
[197] Forgacs, David (ed.) *The Gramsci Reader: Selected Writings 1916-1935*, New York: New York University Press, 2000, pg. 301

selects, organizes and interprets our experience, we must recognise "*the alternative meanings and values, the alternative opinions and attitudes, even some alternative sense of the world, which can be accommodated and tolerated within a particular effective and dominant culture.*"[198]

In this respect the idea of hegemony and the social agents it requires for its maintenance as a *lived* experience rather than abstract concept is considerably broadened out, and indeed makes the matrix of inter-linking relationships between these groups seem more confusing. However, as noted in the previous paragraph, it also shows that 'dominant' forms of political-economic practices and the ideational anchorage in which it gains socio-cultural legitimacy are not imposed from above in a coherent project of class rule (even though it might manifest as a co-ordinated bid for control), as suggested by Edward Bernays in *Propaganda*. Rather, that ideational anchorage must be considered as a site for the *contestation* of cultural and political-economic values. This contestation must also take into account the historically specifically moment when the 'masses' begin to be confronted by leading political-classes. Their power to transform prevailing norms appears to be made redundant by the schematic laid out by Bernays (who belittles them as 'rubber stamps,') and the more rigid, orthodox base-superstructural models. Rather, if we take Benjamin's theory of mechanical reproduction of artwork as the point in which the wider public (working classes and white collar classes) become an important political *and* cultural constituency, we witness politicians and capitalists alike having to 'delve' down below, to search their aspirations, their stylistic preferences and their political voice. This is demonstrated in David Gartman's *Auto Opium* and in the case study presented on Edward Bernays' work on the election campaign of Calvin Coolidge in the final chapter.

"*Indeed it is significant in our own period how very early this attempt is, how alert the dominant culture now is to anything that can be seen as emergent.*"[199]

Alternative and oppositional forms to hegemony are most commonly drawn from what Williams designates either 'residual' or 'emergent' cultures. Williams claims that in the case of 'residual' cultures, experiences, meanings and values drawn from previous social formations 'reside' and continue to be practised, and remain inexpressible in terms of the dominant culture. The most obvious case of residual cultures is religious values within the

[198] Williams, Raymond *Problems in Materalism and Culture: Selected Essays*, London: Verso, 1980, pg. 39
[199] Ibid., pg 41

first capitalist societies. Williams somewhat confusingly contends that 'most religious meanings and values' have already been incorporated into the dominant system, ignoring the way in which they might have helped shape the form of that dominant system from the outset, whilst also maintaining that some religious meanings continues to remain outside the dominant culture and thus residual. Emergent cultures are more complicated because they suggest that new meanings and values, new significances and experiences are constantly being created *within* the dominant culture. Therefore, 'there is then a much earlier attempt to incorporate them, just because they are part- and yet not a defined part- of effective contemporary practice.'[200]

Therefore at any given point within society, the dominant and effective culture- the culture of the hegemon- is in an antagonistic but practical contestation with both residual cultures that ties it to the past, and emergent cultures that suggest or predict future social formations (something which I argue is increased by the grasping of cultural 'equality' facilitated by the mechanical reproduction and mass availability of culture). Both residual and emergent cultures suffer varying degrees of incorporation into the dominant cultures, and Williams understands this as primarily a temporal relation. Some cultures remain completely outside the realm of hegemony, to be discarded, frowned upon, and most likely forgotten. Others are incorporated at different rates, some as obviously antagonistic, others so completely and assuredly that it is difficult to recognise that neither their antagonism, nor the historical struggle that makes it now so natural- I would argue that the role of African-Americans in capitalist advertising is just one example.

For Williams there is a real difference between *alternative* and *oppositional* forms of culture, that incubate meanings and practices in a different way to how they are understood by the mainstream or from how they might be eventually re-interpreted by dominant and hegemonic forms. 'Alternative' in this sense refers to 'finding a different way to live and wishes to be left alone with it,' whereas 'Oppositional,' is whereby one 'finds a different way to live and wants to change the society in its light.' It is akin therefore to individual or small-group solutions to social crisis and those solutions that belong to political and ultimately revolutionary practice.

[200] Ibid.

We can nonetheless understand the perpetuation of residual cultures, produced by earlier social formations where certain real meanings and values were generated, and which continue to thrive because they 'represent areas of human experience, aspiration and achievement, which the dominant culture under-values or opposes, or even cannot recognise.'[201] With regard to emergent cultures, on the other hand, requires a non-metaphysical and non-subjectivist explanation which bears on the process of persistence of residual practices. It is the *narrative* of how new classes and class consciousness forms.

In practice, the concrete historical moment that unravels during the rise of Sloanism- as opposed to thinking about the same moment in terms of Fordism- produces a number of contending residual and emergent cultures that contribute to the stylization or *iconology* of Sloanism. The next chapter will give precedence to the Custodian cultural hegemony of the mid-to-late 19th century as the key residual culture that intersected with an increasingly rationalized, managerialized, production-consumption focused dominant culture. The 'emergent' cultures will prioritize the modernist and avant-garde movement whose anti-hegemonic and progressive impulses began to eclipse Custodian norms and gradually embraced by the dominant classes in industries that required their styles and techniques to reach out to the public, and the final chapter will focus more clearly on the advertising and PR industries as exemplars of the mass persuasion complex in which the *hegemony* of Sloanism made itself manifest.

2.8 Conclusion

This chapter has sought to provide the theoretical tools necessary to interrogate the 'aesthetics of hegemony' in the United States. It has shown that though the neo-Gramscian oeuvre fails to confront the issue of aesthetics as a way of thinking about hegemony, there is sufficient theoretical space to do so. The key areas in which this is possible is i) to shift the analysis to Sloanism, ii) to be more fluid in the ascribing 'norms' and 'values' to individuals and social groups, and iii) to take more account of the industries and agencies of mass persuasion that lend hegemony a distinct power in early 20th century America.

[201] Ibid., pg 42

Marxist writings on aesthetics and culture showcase a concern for the *production* of artwork and cultural artefacts and what these might do to conceal or reveal social antagonisms. Lukacs' theory of aesthetics is directed to producing artforms that are relevant to the social struggle of working class, whereas Gramsci's sketchy cultural theory points *forward* to embracing modernism as a way of de-falsifying worker consciousness. Crucially, they both highlight the role of artistic and cultural producers in the formation and maintenance of hegemony. Gramsci also opens up ways of thinking about the *consumption* of art and culture in the terms of the securing of consent in hegemony.

Walter Benjamin and Raymond Williams provide the theoretical tools in which neo-Gramscian theory can more fully grasp the aesthetic dimension of hegemony. In *The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction,* Benjamin regards the era of mass reproducibility as one presenting cultural challenges to received norms and values. This is because for the first time non-elite groups have access to art and culture that was previously the preserve of Custodian elites. The very fact of having this access represents for Benjamin a qualitatively new period of history. Non-elite groups are in no way obliged to consider art and culture through the same criterion of aesthetic judgement, and therefore can imbue art and culture with their *own* meanings and values. Accordingly, products of *mass culture* do not act as functional aspects of the capitalist economy, but are considered as artefacts that hold emancipatory meaning in a society conditioned by discourses of upward social mobility. As such, things like status, style and fashion represent aesthetic 'markers' of success in mounting challenges to 19th century hierarchies of social order. In other words, it gives neo-Gramscians to consider more centrally the idea of moving upwards through the social ladder, and to think about *emulation* and *material aspiration* themselves as political and social action.

Williams provides the neo-Gramscians with a more fluid and dynamic framework of class relationships. Williams argues that 'hegemony' is not just about the filtering of elite 'norms' and 'values' downwards through society. Rather, residual and emergent cultures collide with dominant cultures, providing new grammars and practices of articulating, visualizing and maintaining hegemony. This is important in the context of early 20th century America when there is a diversification of the structure of society, with new social groups contributing their ideas and practices alongside 'residual' attempts to keep aspects of the old order in place in an era of transformation.

As I will aim to elucidate in chapters 3 and 4, the uniqueness of the United States experience lies precisely in the *intersection* of i) the transformation of the *idea* of cultural hierarchy within the US, ii) the aestheticization of domestically rendered discourses of *mobility* and *stylistic emulation*, iii) the *transnationalization* of artistic styles and techniques that emanated from *counter-hegemonic* social groups as responses and mediations to the apparent *deus ex machina* of modernity and iv) the embryonic co-ordination of a mass persuasion industry that tied these processes together and reconfigurated the *ability* and *form* of hegemony in an iconology of Sloanism.

Chapter 3

The Transformation of Class and Class Consciousness in the United States

3.1 Introduction

The previous chapter demonstrated the tools provided by both neo-Gramscian political-economic theory and cultural Marxism to analyse the hegemony of *Sloanism*. By paying attention to the shifting terrains of cultural and aesthetic contestation as outlined by the work of Benjamin and Williams, this chapter will show *how* transformation in the structures of class and class consciousness in the United States provided the socio-cultural potential for Sloanism to hold meaning and power during an era of transformation.

Specifically it will show that throughout the 19th century, a discourse of *upward social mobility* co-existing uneasily with more direct political class-based organization. This holds relevance for the concept of Sloanism, because the market strategy of brand differentiation and a hierarchy of product styles were aimed at 'capturing' this sense of mobility. To put it a different way, it was not so much that Sloanist policies created a cultural sense of upward mobility and emulative aspiration, but rather that these discourses of mobility already existed in American society and themselves shaped the rise and legitimization of Sloanism.

In order to capture this consciousness of mobility, the chapter will begin by assessing the rise of the mass society in the United States. Specifically, it will trace the rise and influence of white collar workers. The numerical rise of the white collar class disrupted 19th century expectations of a clear division of society between entrepreneurs and wage workers. Furthermore, they carried with them a set of contradictory socio-cultural values and aspirations. These values and aspirations, whilst in some way anchored in the capitalist celebration of private property and private accumulation, were also surmounted by changing cultural mannerisms, expectations of social mobility, transforming ideas of art and literature, access to education, as well inherited social ideas of religiosity and Victorian moralism that held sway after the Civil War. As such, the problematique arising for neo-Gramscian theory is in what ways this class can be captured by a framework of *Sloanism*. Were the white collar groups particularly susceptible to the stylistic hierarchization of commodities? In what ways were they susceptible, or indeed contribute to the systems of mass persuasion that arose in early 20th century America? How did their values, aspirations and cultural values interact

with other social groups? Moreover, what were the cultural meanings they ascribed to massly reproducible artwork as intimated by Walter Benjamin?

It will be argued that the white collar social groups distanced themselves from manual labour groups and during the 19th century worked towards achieving goals of upward social mobility. The poignancy of Sloanism is then how this could be realized in the domain of consumption. The idea that one could be seen to be moving up the 'ladder' of social hierarchy through the consumption and appreciation of particular styles, fashions and tastes resonates strongly with the white collar classes. But who provided the criterion of what styles, fashions and tastes represented this upward movement?

It will be argued that the key to unlocking *what* styles and cultural tastes contributed towards the hegemony of Sloanism is the *aesthetic* contestation between a 'Custodian' class and an emergent generation of individuals who began to embrace modernity and the styles associated with artistic modernism. This aesthetic contestation- an intra-class as well as inter-generational one- shows how Williams' schematic of hegemony played out at the turn of the 20th century. The 'Custodians' represent a *residual* culture from which particular norms and discourses of American character were drawn by the mass persuasion industries. Likewise, the groups of individuals that embraced modernity, despite their counter-hegemonic impulse, provided an *emergent* culture based on individual selfhood and self-fulfillment that were the hallmarks of the Sloanist political-economic formation.

As such, this chapter seeks to interrogate precisely the fracturing of social classes and groups and how their ideas, values and norms over the conditions of American society at the time influenced the birth of a paradigmatic political-economic structure, and how the contribution of non-hegemonic groups eventuated the hegemony of that structure. In keeping with the theoretical nuances offered by Raymond Williams and Walter Benjamin, the proposition here is that the socially acceptable ideals of upward mobility and individual freedom became a fundamental part of the capitalist fabric and dispersed potential class antagonisms; this is achieved through the rise of mechanically reproducible cultural artefacts that allowed working and middle classes to consume those products and characterise and think of themselves *apart* from class. The operationalization of techniques of mass persuasion, however haphazard, provided the sense that they were being *asked* and being *included* in the process of America's national maturation as an economy and political power. Gartman's

tracing of the design history of the automobile, for example, shows how the needs and aspirations of salaried workers (blue collar or white collar) were fundamental to the re-shaping of car design from the carriage style, chauffeur-driven vehicles of the late 1890s to the utilitarian inspired Model T Ford after the First World War. Whereas Ford himself was at the beginning to rest upon this model, believing it to be the perfect socio-economic solution, offering stylistic simplicity and harmony. Alfred Sloan, chairman of General Motors and chief rival of Ford, is for our purpose more relevant as he introduced the concept of stylistic obsolescence to the GM range, differentiating products aimed at different perceived social groups and integrating an aspirational model of advertising and marketing to achieve market dominance.

This chapter will therefore argue that despite a breakdown of Custodian cultural hegemony, their power and values were strong enough to be retained as a 'residual' culture that permeated and legitimated certain aspects of the new era of mass persuasion. Edward Bernays' management of Calvin Coolidge, and his depiction as a simple, obedient, temperate and hard-working man of the people carefully walked the line between elevation of the Custodian character whilst appealing to a residual 'folk' sensibility that was thought to capture middle class 'plainspeak' and values of piety and sobriety. It will also argue that the emergence of the American Modernists as a somewhat unintended cultural force, first challenging the norms and values of the Custodian set in a wide array of issues from historiography to aesthetic judgement, and then their uneasy mobilisation into the structures and institutions of mass persuasion. As such this chapter seeks to fulfill the theoretical claims made in Chapter 2, that a 'aesthetic' approach to understanding hegemony can account for the discordance and contradictions in the formation of values and norms, and how those contribute to the 'power' of the American way of life.

3.2 The Emergence of the 'Masses'

"*The white-collar people slipped quietly into modern society. Whatever history they have had is a history without events; whatever common interests they have do not lead to unity; whatever future they have will not be of their own making. If they aspire at all it is to a middle course...and hence to an illusory course in an imaginary society. So before an adequate idea of them could be formed,* ***they have been taken for granted as familiar actors of the urban mass.***"[202]

[202]Wright Mills, C *White Collar: The American Middle Classes,* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002, pg. ix

C. Wright Mills argues that the emergence of the white collar worker as a *mass* political-economic and cultural phenomenon is one of the defining features of the early 20th century American socioscape. Their unexpected numerical rise not only disrupted 19th century intellectual expectations of a clear division of society between entrepreneurs and wage workers, but also carried with them a set of often contradictory socio-cultural values and aspirations. These values and aspirations, whilst in some way anchored in the capitalist celebration of private property and private accumulation, were also surmounted by changing cultural mannerisms, expectations of social mobility, transforming ideas of art and literature, access to education, as well inherited social ideas of religiosity and Victorian moralism that held sway after the Civil War.

This 'class' of people, moreover, were cemented in their general indistinguishability by their terms of reference; the 'middling sort,' the 'people,' the 'public,' the 'masses.'[203] Variously pitted either as a modern branch of the traditional working class, or as a 'lower' offshoot of the pre-existent petit-bourgeois strata of American society, their early emergence as reflected in serious literature saw them as 'subjects of lamentation,' and in popular or kitsch writing as 'targets for aspiration.'[204] Yet for all their 'living out in slow misery his yearning for the quick American climb,'[205] the white collar as a social class or group were pinpointed by both politicians and corporate strategists from the late 1890s for their assumed fungibility in both the polling booths and the marketplace. It was precisely the imprecise characterization of this social group that caused public relations consultants, market researchers and advertisers to believe that the white collar carried with them a 'mass' way of life in the era of rapid social transformation, revealing in their behaviour and choices the psychological themes that characterised the early 20th century American epoch. If the spectacular 19th century economic growth of the United States had discursively furnished the nation's ideational superstructure with the paramountcy of the 'free entrepreneur,' then the opening decades of the 20th century witnessed 'the decline of the free entrepreneur and the rise of the dependent employee...the American scene has paralleled the decline of the independent individual and the rise of the little man in the American mind.'[206]

Stromquist, Shelton *Reinventing "The People": The Progressive Movement, The Class Problem and the Origins of Modern Liberalism*, Chicago: University of Illinois, 2006, pg. 10

[204] Wright Mills, C *White Collar: The American Middle Classes,* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002, pg. xiiii

[205] Ibid., pg. 4

[206] Ibid., pg. 13

It is into this 'melting pot' of transforming social classes and changing understanding of social hierarchies that this chapter seeks to address the *aesthetic* of an emergent Sloanist political-economy. The importance of the aforementioned white collar group is their role in supporting the structures of mass consumption, their embodiment of the 'American Dream,' and the sometimes elusive passages of upward mobility, which continue to feature as distinguishing (if somewhat journalistic) expressions of the contemporary global political economy.

Their 'condition', as so pitifully unravelled in the character of Willy Loman in *Death of a Salesman,* showcases on the one hand, an externally buoyant confidence in their personal abilities and attributes and perpetual desire of upward mobility. On the other, the character's introverted emotional despair, gradual disintegration of familial relationships and ultimate failure to climb the social ladder poignantly reminds us of the themes of alienation, mistrust and disorientation that the public relations and advertising industries instrumentalized as 'hooks' to capture the attention of both voters and consumers, in political campaign strategies and nationwide marketing from the 1920s onwards. Arthur Miller created his disquieting portrayal of the American 'everyman' in 1949, by which time the entirety of the nation's political machine was dedicated to capturing the attention of the 'middlin' sort,' and the mass consumption market had sufficiently expanded so that its advertisements and insignias adorned the highways and main streets of every American town and city. In *Babbit,* Sinclair Lewis sketches this future ubiquity as it is *in the process of emerging*, and traces through the protagonist the mindset of the white collar worker in 1922:

"It was the best of nationally advertised and quantitatively produced alarm-clocks, with all modern attachments, including cathedral Chime, intermittent alarm, and a phosphorescent dial. Babbit was proud of being awakened by such a rich device. Socially it was almost as creditable as buying expensive cord tires."[207]

It is this mentality- one where the individual organizes his or her understanding of life around the supposed qualities that the commodity brings- that is the underpinning of the Sloanist political-economic formation and the social forces that allowed its proliferation and deepening in American society. The social and ideational transformations that facilitated this began after the Civil War, and in the Gilded Age that followed until the depression of the

[207] Reprinted in *America in the 1920s: Literary Sources and Documents, Volume II Voices of Modernity*, Alan Bilton and Philip Melling (eds.) (2004), pg. 109

1890s, the co-existence of ideas of the 'simple life' on the one hand and the lure of wealth on the other decisively began to weigh towards the latter. 'Big business, big labor, big cities, big farms- all were quickly becoming the norm rather than the exception.'[208]

"Universal literacy was supposed to educate the common man to control his environment. Once he could read and write he would have a mind fit to rule. So ran the democratic doctrine. But instead of a mind, universal literacy has given him rubber stamps, rubber stamps linked with advertising slogans, with editorials, with published scientific data, with the trivialities of the tabloids and the platitudes of history, but quite innocent of original thought."[209]

Edward Bernays' revealing passage on the 'mind' of the common man demonstrates one of the more extreme and openly patronising attitude to the rise of the 'masses' during the period leading up to the Great Depression. Imbuing the masses with a general character of such uselessness, Bernays places on this apparently new social class the vulnerability and susceptibility to manipulation by the mass persuasion industries of advertising and public relations. Mobilizing the entire media apparatus- from traditional newsprint and books[210] to the newly available forms of cinema newsreel and radio- Bernays highlights the role of 'invisible' leaders of American society; non-elected and non-accountable members of a shadowy group who have steered the country through its early industrialization and placed the United States on the brink of global leadership in economy and international affairs following the First World War.

His plea, or treatise, towards this *invisible government*[211], was for them to enthusiastically grasp the reins of the mass persuasion apparatus as a means of both a) enhancing their *directive* role in American society- that is to say, to set the parameters of social and cultural judgement, and to incubate their values of profiteering as *legitimate* values of the society as a whole- and b) *veiling* their characters and personnel from that very society, in order to bypass cultural and socio-political resistance against the demands from below- whether those were Debbs' inspired Socialist platform of nationwide working class organization, or the political and economic pressures generated by the Progressive movement. Bernays' own personal

[208]Shi, David E. *The Simple Life: Plain Living and High Thinking in American Culture*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985, pg. 154.
[209] Bernays, Edward *Propaganda*, New York: Horace Liverlight, 1930, pg. 21
[210] Ibid., pg. 24
[211] A term which resonates with Robert Cox's concept of *Nebuleuse*, a complex, distant but intricate set of relationships that set the parameters of what is known and what is asked about power- those whose values and norms are regarded as the dominant branch of hegemonic formations.

belief that this was necessary for the smooth functioning of American democracy paralleled widespread concerns of elite groups about the role of the masses and the public, reflecting long-standing Hamiltonian fears of mob rule. For him, the key to circumventing their potential anger and violence was to reach into their subconscious aspirations and use the findings of psychiatry and public relations research to *re-articulate* the values of the elite so they fitted in smoothly with those perceived values and interests of the masses and the public.

More than anything though, Bernays vision offers a compelling and explicit justification of critical and Marxist explanations of *hegemony*; the idea that in a democratic society which relies on certain cross-class alignments, tools of consensus-formation (such as the education system) became vital in the maintenance of elite class power, in order to disseminate their values and make them appear 'normal'. As such, the explanation of the advertising and PR industries in this manner tends towards the idea that they are tools of the capitalist elite, relentlessly pursuing every domain of life that can be commoditised and sold, and over time acting as an auxiliary branch of US-based but transnationally mobile capital whose success can be read and viewed in the very expansion of both mass consumption society as well as the enduring symbols of American marketing and advertising that is globally pervasive in the current era. In the Coxian rendering of neo-Gramscian theories of hegemony, the PR and advertising industries therefore act as a key node and platform where elite norms and values undergo a *public* and *international* re-articulation, augmented by phrases, symbols, suggestions and visualizations that appeal to ideals of an aspirational, upwardly mobile life that can be judged according to the products and fashion styles individuals choose to uptake.

Bernays' ideas of incorporating theories of individual and mass psychology into *Public Relations* speak to an era where the parameters of *mass persuasion* began to broaden and the instruments of dissemination became more widespread, usable (or receivable) and 'normal' across the country. The ability to send political messages through radio broadcasts and adorn 'main street' billboards with nationally-syndicated marketing and advertising campaigns therefore provided the American political-economic elite with a rapid means of cutting through the disconnected islands and locales of American towns and cities, helping to nurture a sense of modern, 20th century American national identity amongst the white collar classes C. Wright Mills identifies as the political-economic constituency that concerned the elites the most. Bernays recognised this as an opportunity to mobilise the distrust, fear and anxiety he presumed lurked within individuals, and turn public relations strategies into campaigns that

offered a *palliative* for these middle class worries. This transformation of political campaigning is matched by transformations in the advertising industry that began to play on people's fears- of being judged unfavourably in terms of fashion, taste and lifestyle- and produced adverts that intimated *what the individual would be without* the particular product.[212] In both the political and market arenas therefore, we see a movement towards directing information and images *towards* the white collar, with marketing strategies being differentiated according to different income groups following the Sloanist introduction of stylistic obsolescence and in-house brand competition (see the example of Sloan's General Motors campaign in Chapter 5).

But what makes the 'white collar,' or the 'middling sort' so vulnerable to PR and advertising industries? C. Wright Mills argues that editorial manipulation and professionalised image-making drew upon pre-existent American discursive and aesthetic hooks that celebrated the 'long tutelage to the soil,' and the 'courage, creativity and resourcefulness,' that followed from it. Furthermore, by bringing into the public domain images and idealisations of characters, Mills asserts that the public audience simply could not know the people they want to talk about or become like (e.g., in advertising). As such, advertising provides 'glimpses of types that can be frozen into the language in which they see the world':

"*Even when they meet the people behind the types face to face, previous images, linked deeply with feeling, blind them to what stands before them. Experience is trapped by false images, even as reality itself sometimes seems to imitate the soap opera and the publicity release*."[213]

Two of the most important discourses drawn from 19th century America that characterise the aesthetics of Sloanism are a) 'Manifest Destiny,' and b) 'Fables of Abundance.'[214] Both of these were re-imagined for the early to mid 20th century American mass audience to include visualised depictions that would *culturally legitimate* the kind of mass industrial capitalist way of life that was conflictually developed after the First World War, including veneration for the 'Captain of Industry' role model of the late 19th century. A central irony of this veneration of public capitalist figures such as Andrew Carnegie and the Rockefeller dynasty was that their institutional practices and desire to monopolize power within their industries was precisely the drift towards an oligarchic form of competition that was antithetical to the

[212] Ewen, Stuart *All Consuming Images: The Politics of Style in Contemporary Culture*, New York: Basic Books, 1988, pg. 13
[213] Wright Mills, C *White Collar: The American Middle Classes,* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002, pg. 14
[214] Lears, Jackson *Fables of Abundance: A Cultural History of Advertising in America*, Basic Books, 1995, pg. 86

independent, small business ideal that appealed to the middle classes. *Manifest Destiny*- originally an early to mid-19th century belief about the necessity and righteousness of spreading the democratic institutions of American society to the Pacific Coast- was augmented by the stunning economic growth of the post Civil War period and imbued with more global sense of expansionism after the Spanish-American War:

"*The far-reaching, boundless future will be an era of American greatness. In its magnificent domain of space and time, the nation of many nations is destined to manifest to mankind the excellence of divine principles*."[215]

As such, at the turn of the 20th century, the essence of American destiny- the long, hard decades of the 'long tutelage to the soil,' became intertwined with pre-existent, almost folklorish 'fables of abundance,' to aesthetically articulate a vision of America that celebrated the *domestic completion of manifest destiny* (i.e., the continental expansion of the Union and total incorporation of contending semi-national entities such as Texas) and the *conquest of scarcity* through the spectacular industrial growth stimulated by organic American capitalism. Both of these ideational discourses were illuminated by stressing the unique, exceptional character of American society, a fundamentally white, Anglo-Saxon Protestant and male rendering of the nation's relatively short history. This historical explanation, the school of American 'Exceptionalism,' laboured under the belief in the innate superiority of a pioneering, hard-working, free people that settled and made *rational* sense of the vast, untamed virgin lands of the American West, bringing with them the political institutions of democracy and the sanctity of the United States Constitution.[216] If during the 19th century, Manifest Destiny helped to justify settlement and conquest west of the Appalachians, to destroy and overcome Native American lands, to annex the French and Spanish colonies and make war with Mexico to reach the Pacific, then its 20th century version would support American corporate dominance in Central America, its semi-imperial control over countries like Puerto Rico, Cuba and the Philippines and eventually its reluctant ascendance to global power.

[215]Weinberg, Albert K *Manifest Destiny: A Study of Nationalist Expansionism in American History*, Crown Publishing Group, 1972, pg. 3

[216] Carroll, Peter and Noble, David *The Free and the Unfree: A New History of the United States*, London: Penguin, 1977, pg. 45

Similar, the discourses of abundance, of the promise of freedom from scarcity was articulated as being achieved through the hard-working, protestant spirit; the great awakenings of the early and mid 19th century preached that a solemn, frugal and dutiful life would deliver Eden in America. Protestant and evangelical thought, that emphasized personal devotion and 'plain-living,' did not so much abhor the concept of wealth and individual material accumulation, but admonished those who turned their accumulated wealth into demonstrations of ostentatious materiality.[217] Yet David Shi emphasizes that despite the prevalence of publically articulated 'spiritual guidance' that prioritised plain living and shunned the role of luxury and symbols of wealth (housing, personal dress, imported European styles) as determining the *status* of people, this co-existed with continual efforts to emulate the very fashions of people associated with the decadent aristocracies of the old world. Throughout American history, conflicts *between* leading social groups animated this contradiction of a public discourse that celebrated the democratic, plain and equal and lived socio-economic and cultural practices that sought the accumulation of material fanfare as an *expression* of social mobility. In the pre-independence period, Shi points to key conflicts between Protestant/Quaker organizations and the merchants of Boston, New York and Philadelphia; at the turn of the 20th century a similar conflict repeated between those who wished industrial America would move in a direction of 'Progressive Simplicity,' and the 'captains of industry,' whose accumulation of wealth had begun to manifest in public demonstrations of grandeur, most notable in the form of the skyscraper.[218] The key point here however, is how these groups attempted to articulate their contending visions of American life and American character to the rest of society. By the 1920s, the focus of attention had changed from the yeoman-farmer-artisan model of Jeffersonian democracy to the urban masses, and the assumed chaos that characterised their existence, interwoven with poverty, violence and ethnic strife.

C. Wright Mills maintains that this transition to a chaotic urban society in the early 20th century made *easier* the regurgitation of discourses and symbols from the 19th century, counterpoising historical idealizations upon contemporary surroundings in order to keep a connection with a beatified past. The assumed insecurity and internal angst of the masses and the urban crowd could be kept in check, utilising sentimentalised renditions of the recent (but

[217] Shi, David E. *The Simple Life: Plain Living and High Thinking in American Culture*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985, pg. 191
[218] Ibid., page 19

not experienced) past in order to legitimize the newer, modern, 'mass' phase of manifest destiny and fabled abundance; the mass consumption market. As outlined in the theory chapter, Benjamin and William's aesthetic theories point towards understanding cultural objects as *refracting* antagonistic virtues and values as well as political ideals for the present or future. Whereas Eagleton understands the cultural artefact as being imbued with the values of the dominant classes and ruling elites[219], the *mass* nature of early 20th century America provides a pivotal moment in which the *medias* of representation become necessarily engaged with the *dominated* in unique ways; that is to say, relatively new but increasingly prevalent forms of cultural communication- whether it be skyscrapers, advertising images or newspaper photojournals- contain *residual* and *emergent cultures* that coincide with those of the dominant. In that sense, manifest destiny and fabled abundance are two legacies of the 19th century that retained poignancy even during the period of rapid socio-economic and ideational change leading up to the Great Depression. This period coincides with the shaping of a recognizable, national aesthetic of the American Dream. As Mills points out, the fact that the 'people' of the early 20th century had no actual experience of the mastery of the continent in the previous century, these national images were a 'sentimental version of historical types that no longer exist, if indeed they ever did.'[220]

The ideal-type that best embodied the twinning of manifest destiny and economic abundance was the character assumed to have made it all possible in the first place; the farmer-artisan. The 'values' of this ideal-type included a 'magical' independence from authority and repression (reflected in the discursive celebration of limited government, 'freedom.'), a great capacity for hard work, spiritual devotion, frugal living and adaptability. This type had no 'master,' no figure of emulation aside from himself, and therefore had no care for 'wordly' possessions to distinguish him from other men.[221] Yet Mills argues that by the time this rendition of an ideal-type became *edited* sufficiently in an era of mass literacy and mass circulation of newspapers, the urban landscape had come to dominate the new American imagination- the farming population declined, and new social groups contended with each other across the pre-existent cleavages and division of race, religion, gender and wealth. Accordingly for Mills, the one universal characteristic of American society from the 1920s was the 'levelling influences of urban civilization, the standardization of big technology and

[219] Eagleton, Terry *The Ideology of the Aesthetic*, Oxford: Blackwell, 1990, pg. 9
[220] Wright Mills, C *White Collar: The American Middle Classes,* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002, pg. 20
[221] Shi, David E. *The Simple Life: Plain Living and High Thinking in American Culture* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985, pg. 33

the media of mass communication'[222] and that 20th century American had emerged with a higher degree of social and political-economic discipline than the frontiersman or rancher of the 19th century could have ever thought of.

Again, to re-iterate, for the purposes of this thesis, I am not attempting to give a full historical account of the emergence of the 'masses,' but to interrogate the manner in which *aesthetic* contestations were directed *towards* them as a means of capturing a relatively new political-economic and socio-cultural constituency whose presumed *lack* of secure cultural anchorage made them vulnerable or susceptible to consuming the *iconological* products of Sloanism. Into this circulation of styles, ideas and renditions of *what it meant to be American*, I argue that the 'masses,' or the 'people,' were engaged by different social groups, for different reasons and within the prism of the mass persuasion complex were also able to *refract* their own developing, contradictory values into the broader schema. Again taking up Williams' idea of hegemony being shaped by the dialectical interchange of *residual* and *dominant* , the following 'ideal-types,' become relevant for the aesthetics of Sloanist political economy[223]

Residual Ideal-Type: the independent farmer-artisan model. Celebrated for contributing to the mastery of the continent, the values and norms ascribed to this ideal-type are unabashedly Protestant; hard work, religious and civil piety, gentle (but not *genteel*) mannerisms. The 'democratic' character of the US, though initiated by the wealthy and more urbane Founding Fathers is *supposed* to have been transmitted in its purest, most ideal state through these figures in the conquest of the West and the fulfilment of Manifest Destiny- no matter the reality of lawlessness, violence and spurious exploitation that was also part and parcel of the westward expansion.[224] In terms of the *aesthetic* grammar that are thought to derive from the farmer-artisan, John Atlee Kouwenhoven argues that 'there was no tradition, no codified grammar, of technological design, but only an intuitive sense of appropriate form.'[225] In political-economic terms, the residual ideal-type harked back to the Jeffersonian model of both the American citizen *and* his conception of a loose federation of states with minimal centralized federal power. The values and characteristics of this ideal-type then 'reside,'

[222] Wright Mills, C *White Collar: The American Middle Classes,* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002, pg. xv
[223] This is not in anyway supposed to be a comprehensive coverage of all the different ideal-types that discursively furnish the
[224]Carroll, Peter and Noble, David *The Free and the Unfree: A New History of the United States* (London: Penguin, 1977, pg. 26
[225]Kouwenhoven, John Atlee *Made in America: The Arts in Modern Civilization*, New York: Doubleday & Co., 1948, pg. 32

within what I would deem the 'dominant' ideal-type that emerged during the Gilded Age of the 1880s- the 'captain of industry.'

Dominant Ideal-Type: the captain of industry model. Emerging during the Gilded Age of the American 1880s, this ideal-type embraces the principles of hard work, frugality and thrift of the residual model, and is given additional characteristics that correlate the ascendancy of mechanization in the late 19th century. As such, this model is typified by the 'engineer-entrepreneur' character of Fredrick Taylor and Henry Ford; a rigorous dedication to scientific principles, their aesthetic grammar is an extension of the vernacular type of the residual model. From the domineering skyscrapers of New York, the magnificence of the Brooklyn Bridge and the machine-dominated River Rouge plant of the Ford Corporation, the aesthetic of an *emergent* advanced mechanized industrial society prioritizes simple, efficient and sleek materials and design, celebrating the 'making of modernity:'

"*native intelligence and common sense; an intuitive mind which leaped beyond the present, and a special engineering talent that combined creativity with practicality, a remarkable memory, a missionary's zeal, and a lifelong capacity for hard work.*"[226]

Despite the wealth accumulated by the captains of industry, and the general belief in scientific progress that constituted a facet of their dominant values, they shared on occasion the practices of Custodian philanthropy, as witnessed by the numerous endowments upon public educational facilities in the late 19th century and early 20th century. Andrew Carnegie was one such figure, and in a famous essay originally published in the *North American Review* in 1889 set out his vision of industrial civilization dominated by the few, driven capitalist entrepreneur:

"*The contrast between the palace of the millionaire and the cottage of the laborer with us today measures the change which has come with civilization. This change…is not to be deplored but welcomed as highly beneficial. It is…essential, for the progress of the race. Much better this great irregularity than universal squalor."*[227]

As such, though the 'dominant' ideal-type can be commonly thought of as being characterised by their *capitalist* values, it is vital to note their *contradictory* and antagonistic social ideas and practices. The dominant ideal-type, I would argue, are the kind of individuals

[226]Lewis, David L. *The Public Image of Henry Ford: An American Folk Hero and His Company*, Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1976, pg. 12

[227] From 'An Ideal of Culture,' Andrew Carnegie, in Harris Smith, Susan and Melanie Dawson (ed.) *The American 1890s: A Cultural Reader*, Duke University Press, 2000, pg. 6

that Bernays' believes constitutes the 'real' government of the United States, and invisible, unelected body of industrialist-entrepreneurs. Their power lay in drawing parallels with the residual ideal-type even though that society had vanished in reality, and that their own business practices were far from the independent capitalist of the early 19th century vision. And it is worth considering whether the specific circumstances of the 1900-1920 period, where labour unrest grew and challenges to corrupt corporate practice were being highlighted by an increasingly restive and moralistic journalist 'muckrakers', is what made Bernays call for an 'implicit veil' to be cast over these supposed ideal-types, so as not to let their sacrosanct image be disturbed.

3.3 The Waning of Custodian Hegemony

"*Your seniors also find themselves irritated and depressed because modern girls are louder and more bouncing than their predecessors, and because their boy-associates are somewhat rougher and more familiar toward them than used to be thought well bred.*" [228]

The above quote in 'A Letter to the Rising Generation,' finds us in the mindset of a typical Custodian attitude. Steeped in late Victorian attitudes, by the time of writing this letter in 1911, Ms. Comer's key concerns are about *attitude* and *manners*. Little attention is paid to *how* a mechanizing, urbanizing society affects these attitudes (and as such their critical purchase tends to sidestep political-economic issues). Rather she places emphasis on the *deus ex machina* of change and transformation, concluding that 'the result of this change of type in American life and American men is to make life a far harder problem.'[229] 'The world is far smaller; it is harder for the individual to live by his own light. The members of the body politic are much more closely knit together in the mesh of common interest today than ever before.'[230] Despite recognizing the broader social changes that might affect the conduct of the younger generation, her letter remains both plea and admonishment, bemoaning the 'external' factors that have caused this situation to be thus:

"*Of your chosen pleasures, some are obviously corroding to the taste; to be frank, they are vulgarizing...How can anything avail to refine children whose taste in humour is formed by the coloured supplements of the Sunday paper, as their taste in entertainment is shaped by continuous vaudeville and the moving-picture shows? It may not be actually coarse, but inanity, stupidity and commonness are even more potent as vulgarizing influences than actual coarseness.*"[231]

[228] 'A Letter to the Rising Generation,' Cornelia A.P. Comer, in *The Atlantic Monthly* (1911, vol. 107), pg. 146
[229] Ibid.
[230] Ibid.
[231] Ibid., pg. 147

Likewise, Ms. Comer is at her wits-ends to grasp the *pace* of change in which this generational breakdown has taken place:

"*I used to look at a good many members of this rising generation and wonder helplessly what ailed them. They were amiable, attractive, lovable even, but singularly lacking in force, personality, and the power to endure. Conceptions of conduct that were the very foundations of existence to decent people even fifteen years their seniors were to them unintelligible.*"[232]

Furthermore, she berates what she sees as a 'trend' of the younger generation to embrace ideas of society and government that are antithetical to the 'equality of opportunity which this country was founded to secure,'[233] namely those claiming themselves as 'socialist' or 'Whitmanite.':

"*It may easily happen that the next twenty years will prove the most interesting in the history of civilization. Nice lads with the blood of the founders of our nation in your veins, pecking away at the current literature on socialism, taking out of it imperfectly understood apologies for your temperaments and calling it philosophy- where will you be if a Great Day should really dawn?"*[234]

It is interesting to note here, that Ms. Comer, presumably anxious about how the material wealth of her own generation afforded those very youngsters the privilege and comfort from which they assumed these unworthy characteristics, reinforces the idea that 'survival' is dependent on those hard-working, frugal qualities that made her own generation so successful- and that their sons should fear challenges from social classes below their own:

"*When your turn comes, you will be tossed on the scrap-heap, shoved aside by boys who have read less and worked more, boys who have thought to some purpose and have been willing- as you are not- to be disciplined in life*."[235]

Ms. Comer's letter summarises many of the key elements of the breakdown of Custodian culture and the transformation of the values and norms that underpinned them *within* their own 'class.' Bemused by their embracing of 'unrefined' mannerisms, their laziness, self-indulgence, skewed ideologies and arrogance, she appears worried that the fabric of her social class is disappearing before her eyes, ready to be supplanted by the pressure from below, the masses, the sons of working class men. This last point is important that it resonates with Wright Mills' conceptualization of the emergent 'white collar.' He argues that

[232] Ibid., pg. 148
[233] Ibid., pg. 150
[234] Ibid.
[235] Ibid.

as a class or social group, they developed in part because of their working parents' desire to see their children move up through the social ladder, to be free of the burden of manual work. Mass circuited kitsch literature accorded them as figures of inspiration- aiming to become the engineer-entrepreneurs of the dominant ideal type:

"*No culture, none of those finer feelings that distinguish the civilized man from the savage aborigines of the wilds...No enthusiasm for truth, for bringing light into dark places...Do you realize, young man that it is not just a job I'm offering you, it is a great opportunity....a splendid opportunity for service and self-improvement. I'm offering you an education gratis."*[236] (Doc Bingham surveys his prospective young employer, 'Mac,' a young working class man who has travelled from rural New York to Chicago to find employment in a printing firm)

What we can take from this is the following: that the Custodian set, generally imparted with values and norms concomitant with late 19th century Victorianism and deriving their ideas of culture from a *transnational* ideal of bourgeois culture are being undercut from 'below' from working and lower-middle classes, who appear more embracing of the values and norms of the 'captain of industry' ideal type. The Custodian elite on the other hand, find their own sons and daughters adrift- characters who like Anthony Patch in *The Beautiful and Damned* prefer the drinking, womanizing and seemingly aimless voyages to Europe. As Geoff Dyer writes in the introduction to the novel:

"*Anthony's attempts at paid employment prove no more successful that his literary and intellectual endeavours. To succeed in the world of finance, he realizes 'the idea of success must grasp his mind.' By comparison the idea of failure seems all-embracing, something that will consume and test his entire being*."[237]

Patch's grandfather in the *Beautiful and the Damned* is an exemplar Custodian. Ageing and disparaging of the frivolity of his grandson's life, the old man leaves the world embittered that the wealth he helped create was not being put to use in the swinging Jazz age. Leaving no dollar to Anthony Patch in his will, his beliefs of hard work, discipline, self-restraint and sobriety are disappearing before his very eyes. Anthony's own views on his grandfather likewise reflect this severe intergenerational fracturing:

"Are you any relation to Adam Patch?"
"Yes he's my grandfather."
"He's done a lot of good."

[236] Dos Passos, John *The 42nd Parallel*, New York: The Modern Library, 1930, pg. 32
[237] Fitzgerald, F. Scott *The Beautiful and the Damned,* London: Penguin Books, 2002. Quote taken from Introduction by Geoff Dyer, pg. vi

"Rot!,' scoffed Anthony. 'He's a pious ass- a chicken-brain.'[238]

When Adam Patch finally passes away, Fitzgerald intimates a key Custodian practice of that elder generation; the merging of an unrepentant industrialism with public philanthropy, believing that by sponsoring education, the next generation would behold his values as their own- "All the newspapers printed his biography, and two of them ran short editorials on his sterling worth, and his part in the drama of industrialism. They referred to the reforms he sponsored and financed."[239] Anthony received none of his grandfather's estate consisting of $40 million.

The point of this is to demonstrate the trauma of an intergenerational class fracturing that was fundamentally *aesthetic* in nature; different appreciations of what constituted emotional or sentimental experience, forged through the dialectical unfolding of a rapidly industrializing society. The irony here is that elder generation who thought themselves as forging the abundant wealth of modern America were aghast at how that modern American started to negatively affect the tastes, styles and attitudes of their children and grandchildren *without* confronting the fact that the forging and maintenance of that society rested on the elevation of principles of individual taste, upward mobility and self-expression through the market, leitmotifs that would later be conquered in a more frequently accessed visual iconology. It is precisely this kind of antagonism within class and class consciousness that Raymond Williams' model of hegemony confronts; that is to say, how residual, dominant and emergent modes collide and coincide to create something new and sometimes unfathomable to those who played a part in creating it.

Jackson Lears' addresses this issue as the 'antimodern' impulse of American cultural transformation *as it was in the process of embracing modernism*. "Antimodernism was not simply escapism; it was ambivalent, often co-existing with enthusiasm for material progress,"[240] and casts issue with the way antimodernists sought to make renderable the seemingly uncontrollable rate of change in American society through a prism of morality, one which neatly reflected the shift in the type of capitalist society- "The older morality embodied

[238] Ibid., pg. 75
[239] Ibid., pg. 239
[240] Lears, Jackson *No Place of Grace: Antimodernism and the Transformation of American Culture, 1880-1920*, New York: Pantheon Books, 1981, pg. xiii

the "producer culture" of an industrializing, entrepreneurial society; the newer nonmorality embodied the "consumer culture" of a bureaucratic corporate state"[241]

Furthermore, this intergenerational conflict witnessed a breakdown in the idea of 'common-sense,' the limits of which had been defined and disseminated by the Custodian stock. "Antimodernists were not primarily powerful businessmen; they were journalists, academics, ministers and literati whose circumstances ranged from the wealthy to the moderately comfortable.' [shared kinship ties, source of income] 'Old-stock, Protestant, they were the moral and intellectual leaders of the American WASP bourgeoisie, who joined their British counterparts in shaping a transatlantic Victorian culture and who helped to maintain dominant norms and values."[242] This questioning of a complacent faith in progress (the kind espoused by the engineer-entrepreneur model) was something also shared by the avant-garde of Artistic modernism- which as an emergent culture of the period will be explored in its *transnational* context in Chapter 4.

Lears also suggests that within this transition- from the 'older morality,' to the 'newer nonmorality,' from the 'producer' to 'consumer' culture was also followed by a shift from a Protestant worldview to a therapeutic worldview; one from the promise of abundance (and the necessary work required to achieve that) to the promise of instant gratification (if people's immediate needs of survival and reproduction are secured): "For Gramsci, dominant social groups maintain power not through force alone but through sustaining their cultural hegemony- that is, winning the 'spontaneous' loyalty of subordinate groups to a common set of values and attitudes. The shift from a Protestant to a therapeutic world view, which antimodern sentiments reinforced, marked a key transformation in the cultural hegemony of the dominant classes in America."[243] In all of these shifts however, what we see in the US is the continual ambiguity of interests, values and styles supported or articulated by the social classes involved in capturing some sort of cultural hegemony. With the ever important symbols and discourses of early to mid 19th century still at hand to be remembered by the older generation, and the future of mass urban cities and urban chaos unraveling (and being embraced) by the younger generation, a rapid diversification of styles, preferences and values could draw from images and discourses from any period, from any place, and with

[241] Ibid., pg xiv.
[242] Ibid., pg., xv
[243] Ibid.

contradictory values forming the *fabric* of hegemony. This is why I have tried to stress the importance of understanding hegemony as a process through which inter- and intra-class aesthetic contestation affects the overall form of hegemony that culturally legitimates a particular political-economic formation- in this case the decades leading up to Sloanism.

It is useful to grasp the sheer scale of social transformation that these Custodians witnessed; as they passed away during the 1920s, the US had became a virtually fully mechanised society, electrified and wealthy, ready to takes its place as a leading power in the international arena, and produced for the first time a society that would come to be defined by its leisure activities and widespread access to those. Similarly, John Dos Passos outlines the disorientation felt by the central character of *Manhattan Transfer* as he struggles to negotiate crossing the road full of speeding automobiles on the same spot where just twenty years before horse and cart would passed by. These themes, crucial to the historiography of American modernisation, are important to us only to the extent that they contextualise the emergence of a new generation of elite-educated political-economic leaders, that sought to breakaway and reform the 'norms' and 'values' of the fathers and grandfathers.

Gilbert Ostrander argues that the 1920s witnessed the emergence of a 'Filiarchy,'; a socio-political and economic structure led by a group of actors that dispensed with reverence for wisdom and tradition and instead sought to re-define their country as *new*. In current with modernisation, they embraced the quicker tempo of social life in the metropolis, adhered to religion only to the extent that it facilitated their goals of self-enrichment, and placed faith with the contemporary, the modern and science. Likewise, Roland Marchand suggests these 'Apostles of Modernity' were particularly welcomed in new industries that were crucial to the expansion of the mass consumption market, such as advertising and public relations, and would become crucial in injecting vitality into the arrangement and design of a distinctly *American* capitalism premised on the mass production-mass consumption nexus.

This contestation, peculiar in the sense of it being largely a generational, inter-elite one, was one primarily fought over *attitude, style, manner* and *response* to social transformations occurring during this period. It did not result in political-economic realignment as such (though both the Democrat and Republicans accommodated the 'new' generation), nor was there a broader questioning of the system that produced these transformations. The

contestation is most presciently articulated in American literature and periodical reviews, and to an extent establish the basis of both ideological and iconological conditions within the advertising industry. In the former, notable American literary figures such as John Dos Passos, Ernest Hemmingway and Malcolm Cowley revealed, in various ways, concerns close to the heart of a younger generation of Ivy-league educated elite- from issues such as moral degradation, capitalist greed, disorientating systems of mass transit, the plight of immigrants, or the folly of warfare. They form part of a larger group of artists who sought, mostly unsuccessfully, to break, or reform the traditions of American artistic production, establishing a historiography of authentic American art, as well as an albeit brief Avant-garde that placed Greenwich Village at the heart of a movement that aimed to rally against what they saw as an increasingly debased, crudely materialistic and superficial capitalist society. Whilst their programme would prove to be ultimately fruitless as both anti-hegemonic and anti-systemic, enough of their innovations in social attitude prevailed to be absorbed in some respect into an expanding market of commodities- fashion is one area where this appears to be obvious; literary styles and genre serialisation in newspapers are also an aspect that integrated their 'progressive' attitudes into the social fabric of everyday life in the US.

3.4 The Younger Generation: Embracing Modernity

"*Age sometimes sees itself surviving in a sort of earthly immortality of influence, an exquisite wraith whose sustenance is human opinion...Age desires not to survive only in an epitaph. Age demands that Youth shall be its earthly immortality.*"[244]

Anne Hard, writing an 'apologia' for the 'younger generation,' is representant of the *way* in which young adults at the turn of the 20th century began to challenge the cultural and moral authority of their elders. Rarely were they motivated by ideas of *systemic* political-economic transformation; rather, for people like Anne Hard, the 'system,' or 'way of life,' was embodied by the cultural authority and leitmotifs of their Custodian elders. As such, situating and appreciating their own cultural and ethical aspirations can help understand the *dialectical* interplay of 'dominant' and 'emergent' cultures during a specific period of American history. This is turn can provide a better sense of how the 'aesthetics' of hegemony began to form in early 20th century. The key questions to be asked of the 'younger' generation are *what* their emergent culture contributed, and *how* their aesthetic challenges conveyed certain aspirations, values and ideas. Of initial importance is the way the younger generation *positioned* themselves within the developing spaces of American society. As they reached adulthood,

[244] Hard, Anne 'The Younger Generation: An Apologia,' *The Atlantic Monthly* (1911, Vol. 107), pg. 538

they were confronted with what they saw as a *new*, emergent, urban society. In this 'melting pot,' they witnessed first hand the diversification of the 'ethnic' stock of American society, saw new micro-cultures emerging in urban areas, and in some cases rallied against what they saw as a crude materialism.

"*It is easy to see why Age distrusts us. Broader spaces, fewer interests, beliefs more single, combined with a perhaps not less important inheritance of unmixed blood, gave to an earlier generation in this country a stability, an unbendable quality which stands as one of the supreme monuments to the possibilities of human character. It is little wonder that it hopes the worst from a generation born of blended racial strains into crowded areas, multifarious occupations and conflicting opinions*."[245]

For those who failed to adhere to the Custodian model, the emergence of a distinct, urban, modernizing culture in the Black neighbourhoods of the major Eastern seaboard cities offered a respite and avenue of escape from the predominance of Anglo-American Protestant cultural values, and the consensual hegemony exercised by the political-economic class. Endearing themselves closer to the disjointed tempos of urban life without the baggage of Victorian ideals of character, and more attuned with the contradictions of modernising social energy, these 'ghettoes' incubated early forms of Jazz and dance that would prove to be pivotal in the cultural shifts of modern America from the 1920s onward.[246] Prizing movement, rhythm, mobility, transition over piety, sobriety and frugality, the hallmarks of the younger generation in advertising and public relations (and indeed the entertainment industry more broadly) were borne here. Their espousal by the wasted and wanton of the Jazz age was as much also to do with the intervention of a genuinely American intelligentsia that rallied against the contradictions of Victorianism and the Custodian ideals- these two together shook the foundations of Victorianism, and coupled with World War 1, settled as an uneasy coalition of progress, liberality, reaction and consensus.[247]

The key to understanding this is not to portray of one faction over another (the younger generation against their Custodian elders) but rather how they synthesised and absorbed each others' epistemological traits that would eventually serve a common goal after the depression; of promoting the necessary *aesthetic* to sustain a new regime of accumulation, based on an ideal of upward economic mobility through consumption. The fact that there could be

[245] Ibid.
[246] Ware, Caroline *Greenwich Village, 1920-1930: A Comment on American Civilization in the Post-War Years*, Boston: Houghton Muffin, 1935, pg. 22
[247] Lasch, Christopher *The New Radicalism in America, 1889-1963: The Intellectual as a Social Type*, London: Chatto & Windus, 1966, pg. 13

accommodation at all at an aesthetic level between a conservative Custodian class and a younger modernising class was because they were drawn from the same Victorian-era stock, responding to ideological and discursive currents that moved as rapidly as the new pace of urban life; different actors, anchored to particular conceptions of race, hierarchy, land and democracy, contested the social organisation of the emergent society, and who would become the dominant voice articulating political, economic and social direction.[248]

Yet in the actual aesthetic challenge against the Custodians, the younger generation focused on criticizing the *tastes* and *manners* of their elders. They rallied against the 'stifling' moral constraints of the Victorian age, its sobriety, sense of moral superiority, and articulated their challenge in their terms of reference they understood from their *own* upbringing. In this, they recognized the Custodian viewpoint of maintaining a *veneer* of dignity and good taste for the *sake* of being recognized as members of a particular social set:

"*There are only two conditions which keep formal manners alive. One is the importance of the ceremonial..in short, for impressing others* ***in order to maintain a caste or cult****. The other is an intense in one's personal dignity.*"[249]

Do these challenges over the *mannerisms* and *tastes* of an elder generation represent a 'counter-hegemonic' challenge? In terms of the neo-Gramscian concept of hegemony, it has been argued that the *theoretical tools do not provide* enough space to think about these apparently minute, aesthetic contestations as *political challenges*. Yet the political-economic elites of the United States in the 19th century maintained their cultural power through the creation, dissemination and maintenance of particular aesthetic 'markers' that represented their 'place' in the hierarchy of social order. The *cultural* challenge to this order, whilst not anti-systemic in a political-economic sense, conveyed emotional and sentimental feelings that the Custodian order was in some way *repressing* the younger generations' yearning for greater expression of individuality. The Custodian 'values' on the other hand prioritized the conformity of manners and styles in order to maintain the look and virtue of 'status:

"*It is perfectly aware of the genuineness of that greater dignity in its parents and yet it cannot help a secret feeling that the old-fashioned manner covered up something just for the sake of*

[248] Coben, Stanley *Rebellion Against Victorianism: The Impetus for Cultural Change in 1920s America*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991, pg. 114
[249] Hard, Anne 'The Younger Generation: An Apologia,' *The Atlantic Monthly* (1911, Vol. 107), pg. 540

the covering. They believed in closed parlors, in heavy hangings at the windows. They desired above all that things should 'look nice. "[250]

The younger generation further challenged the Custodians by emphasizing that their elders' focus on particular tastes, mannerisms and styles were in some way 'false.' That is to say that their values prioritized 'appearance,' rather than the actual content of their moral and ethical preferences.

"*The difference of emphasis, however, which distinguishes the younger from the elder time, is that ours is an emphasis not upon* ***form*** *but upon* ***content.***"[251]

As such, the aesthetic challenge initiated by the 'younger generation,' focused on the values and understanding of society and culture that could be gained through 'experience,' and stepping outside the 'closed' parlors into the dynamism of urban society. Through this experience they believed they could transform the strict culture of individual repression and find 'nourishment' in their surroundings:

"*The demand that we shall get our intellectual nourishment from one source is of a piece with the demand that we shall get our spiritual nourishment from one source. We are glad that the day is gone which believed in only one avenue to culture; we are glad that the day is come which believes that in the house of beauty there are many mansions*."[252]

Through this, the younger generation began to understand the *diversity* emerging in American society, and the multiplicity of challenges emerging as a result of this cultural diversification. Moreover, there is a recognition that 'commerce' may actually be the reason why the different tastes and cultural preferences of diverse social groups began to be recognized.:

"It is, however, confusing to dismiss in a paragraph the total effect of our aesthetic surroundings on the younger public, because there is no one public, there are score. Not only can we get the rug, the picture, the jewel, the fruit, the bit of lace, - from north, from south, from next state, from far country; but there is also a commercial response to the dramatic tastes of every section of the community."[253]

The issue arising from this aesthetic challenge to the Custodian order may have been a quiet revolution in the transformation in manners and moral outlook. What is important for understanding how this contributes to the 'aesthetics' of hegemony in early 20th century America is the way in which it laid the 'groundwork,' for the diversification of cultural norms

[250] Ibid., pg. 541
[251] Ibid.
[252] Ibid., pg. 543
[253] Ibid., pg. 544

of different social groups. By issuing a challenge from *within* the received Custodian order, the younger generation show that the 'norms' and 'values' of elite groups underwent a crisis, and demonstrate the pertinence of understanding the *instability* of ruling elite interests. Furthermore, because these challenges were anchored in emotional issues about 'grasping' the new cultures and modern society, it was precisely characters like Anne Hard that *embraced* the art and culture of new styles such as modernism that also issued artistic challenges to received norms and values about aesthetic judgement. This issue will be covered in Chapter 4, but for now it might be pertinent to reproduce here Cowley's eight-point 'system of ideas' that characterised the Greenwich Village attempts at formulating a coherent set of practices and ideals. As he remarks of the early 1920s bohemia: "*Greenwich Village was not only a place, a mood, a way of life: like all bohemias, it was also a doctrine.*"[254]

1. *The Idea of Salvation by the Child*: A bohemian belief that the individual's special potentialities are 'slowly crushed' by a standardised society and through 'mechanical methods of teaching.' As such, this first point addresses the actual socialisation of children through teaching, and points toward the formation of dominant social norms and values as being deeply embedded in society and the individual from an early age. The only way to combat this is to completely change the system and focus of education itself.
2. *The Idea of Self-Expression*: A belief that each person's *purpose* in life is to express themselves, or 'to realize [his] full individuality through creative work and beautiful living.' A statement regarding the manner in which society assigns *value* and individual *self-worth*.
3. *The Idea of Paganism*: 'The Body is a temple in which there is nothing unclean.' In the context of a Custodian class who articulated their visions of individual character in Christian, or Protestant, terms, the avant-garde put as a central concern the overcoming of a archaic moral system that stressed piety and religiosity.
4. *The Idea of Living for the Moment*: This can be seen as a crucial, defining feature of the Greenwich village avant-garde, and also addressed Gilbert Ostrander's notion of 'Filiarchy,'[255] which he defines as the rule of society by the young. In both of these, reverence for sagacity and the wisdom of the elders is replaced by a less stable

[254] Cowley, Malcolm *Exile's Return: A Literary Odyssey of the 1920s*, London: Penguin Books, 1994, pg. 81
[255] Ostrander, Gilman M. *American Civilization in the First Machine Age: 1890-1940,* Harper Row, 1972, pg. 10

preference to make judgements according to the whims of the present, constantly shifting opinions and ideas to keep up with the quickening tempo of modernity. Either way, this marks a moment whereby experience is conceived of as *living for the moment*, initiating the gung-ho lifestyles that Veblen had expressed concerns about in the 'Theory of the Leisure Class.'[256]

5. *The Idea of Liberty*: For the avant-garde, this meant that any law of social custom designed to inhibit or repress self-expression should be destroyed; it ultimate enemy being Puritanism. Self-expression is particularly important here, as early advertisers and marketeers were quick to pick up on a social trend that began to privilege the 'individual' as an idea to revolve consumption around. Specifically the notion of commodities appealing to self-realised characteristics would become an important facet in Motivational Research and the public relations industry more broadly.
6. *The Idea of Female Equality*: "They should have the same pay, same working conditions, the same opportunity for drinking, smoking and taking or dismissing lovers.
7. *The Idea of Psychological Adjustment*: A general belief in Freudian ideas of individual repression and maladjustment. 'Adjusting' to situations accordingly for the avant-garde also meant the enthusiastic support for psychoanalytical counselling and therapy as a means to achieve a 'better balance.' This idea was championed for specific capitalist purposes by Edward Bernays.
8. *The Idea of Changing Place*: "By expatriating himself, by living in Paris, Capri or the South of France, the artist can break the puritan shackles, drink, live freely and be wholly creative."

The 'manifesto' of Greenwich Village was a cultural challenge to the received norms and values of the Custodian attitudes. Individuals and social groups sought on the one hand to detach themselves from the stifling culture of the Victorian era.[257] It was also an attempt by artists to isolate themselves from what they saw and understood as the crass materialism of a capitalist society. Curiously, they simultaneously embraced the 'lowbrow' cultures of jazz

[256] Veblen, Thorstein *The Theory of the Leisure Class*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007, pg. 48

[257] Coben, Stanley *Rebellion Against Victorianism: The Impetus for Cultural Change in 1920s America*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991, pg. 17

and the emergent intellectualism of artistic modernism.[258] What they resented in particular was the 'middlebrow' cultural artefacts aimed at salaried workers in urban environments. For those cultural artefacts neither contained the intellectual, 'authentic' qualities of modernist art, nor the spontaneity and vibrancy of cultures emerging from isolated enclaves such as the Harlem Renaissance.[259] What is important about the emergence of a younger generation whose ideals were antagonistic against their elders was the *very fact* that Custodian norms had been challenged from within. The younger generation's embracement of the 'rhythms' and 'tempos' of modernity, their willingness to count alternative and subordinate cultures as virtuous all contributed to the transformation of structures of class consciousness. The *ideals* of upward social mobility, existing throughout the 19th century, suddenly appear *realizable* as the 'barrier' of cultural mobility begins to become dismantled.

Yet the list of points in the Cowley's Greenwich village manifesto were surprisingly close in ideals to those espoused by the industries of mass persuasion as they sought to increase corporate profitability and increase the consumption of commodity goods. How did an 'emergent' culture as embodied by the younger generation contribute to the lexicon and aesthetic of mass consumption? The following Chapter will analyse the historical development and tension between an 'American' vernacular art and *transnationally* arbitrated circulation of aesthetic criterion for 19th century bourgeois art *and* early 20th century modernism. Though unintentional, counter-hegemonic, alternative and emergent ideas that conveyed specific qualities of gender equality, individual self-fulfillment, self-expression, psychological adjustment and *mobility* all became key leitmotifs of the articulation of hegemony. Is this because there is something about capitalism that is ready and awaiting to 'co-opt' the latest trends and fashions for its own purposes? Or is it rather that the rise of modernist discourses and aesthetic challenges provided a template for the fulfillment of the promises of access to 'abundance' and 'mobility,' that had previously been unrealizable due to the strict cultural order of the Custodian era?

[258] Marchand, Roland *Advertising the American Dream: Making Way for Modernity, 1920-1940*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985, pg. 224

[259] Osofsky, Gilbert *Harlem: The Making of a Ghetto: Negro New York, 1890-1930*, New York: Harper and Row, 1971, pg. 40

3.5 Conclusion

This chapter has demonstrated that early 20th century America witnesses a number of transformations in the structure of class and class consciousness. The emergence of the 'white collar' class is of particular importance for an analysis of a *Sloanist* society because they were the class of people that were targeted by politicians, business and advertising. Their values and aspirations have been held to be the key to unlocking the power of the 'American Dream.' Their lack of anchorage in either traditional working classes of 19th century bourgeois groups meant that their 'cultural' parameters were malleable. C. Wright Mills shows that this group of people were fundamentally interested in upward social mobility, and used stylistic emulation of 'higher' classes to position themselves and climb the social ladder.

Of further importance is the inter-generational contestation between the Custodian set and the 'younger generation.' This 'contest' was fought over aesthetic issues, including manners, fashions, stylistic and artistic preferences. It also provided the younger generation to proclaim the virtue of experience in urban areas, and to embrace the very chaos of modernity that the Custodians feared. The importance of the breakdown of Custodian norms is threefold. Firstly it demonstrates that any theory of political economy that analyses early 20th century America cannot presume stability of 'norms' and 'values,' of dominant classes. Secondly this chapter shows that one way to interrogate how norms and values are challenged from *within* social groups is through looking at the aesthetic challenges facing those groups in periods of rapid social and cultural transformations. Finally, in keeping with Williams' idea of hegemony, it shows that despite the eclipsing of Custodian cultural hegemony, enough of their conservative values 'resided' in society that could be later used and articulated by industries of mass persuasion. Therefore the interplay of norms and values showcase the relevance of an aesthetic approach to understanding hegemony. Whereas the traditional tools of neo-Gramscian do not allow an exploration of the shifts in class and class consciousness (aside from appearing as functional aspects of a more fundamental change in the production system), evaluating the aesthetic challenges within and between classes or social groups highlights the way in which *Sloanism* captured the antagonisms and contradictions about *the way in which people culturally apprehended* their environment and relationships.

The next chapter will go onto demonstrate how these shifting structures of class and class consciousness were mediated by transformations in artistic and cultural ideas and practices, both domestically and internationally.

Chapter 4: American Pastoral, American Dream: Culture and Practices

4.1 Introduction

Having established in the previous chapter that relevant *aesthetic* contestations that gave American society a fluid sense of class and consciousness in the decades leading up to the Great Depression, this chapter seeks to contextualise those *domestically* comprehended transformations in a *transnational* circulation of ideas that sprang from artistic reactions of modernity and modernization. I have chosen to isolate those ideas that demonstrate explicit and implicit counter-hegemonic attributes to showcase that the *aesthetic of hegemony* that manifests itself in Sloanism was produced and consumed through this circulation of artistic and cultural ideas; both those that harked back to the 19th century, and some that anticipated the future, with a rising counter-hegemonic avant-garde emerging in New York city.

As such, this chapter will correlate the schema of hegemony as laid out by Raymond Williams. In the context of the arising of a mass persuasion complex situated around (but not wholly) the Advertising and PR industries, it seems relevant to highlight a further tension between what constitutes cultural objects. PR especially demonstrates its force and utility by appealing to the claims of science and rationality, whereas the Bernays case study should show that in fact it was rather a opportunistic admixture of art, culture, celebrity, pop psychology and emergent behavioural theories. This *aesthetic* of rationality and science, I will argue descends from a vernacular culture of American society in the 19th century (some call this 'folk' culture) that prioritized simplicity and efficiency- from the making of the tools itself themselves, to the products of those tools. It is a narrative of how the pastoral settlement of the westward expansion, buoyed by discourses of Manifest Destiny and enticed by the prospect of creating abundance, detached itself from the prevailing fashions and styles of European society, fashions, styles and artistic tastes that resonated and were emulated by east coast elites during the 19th century.

Those same elites however, wrestled with the ideas and practices of their own natural and built environment, and in poetry, literature and painting, attempted to produce a self-conscious, authentic 'American' art whose parameters of aesthetic judgement nevertheless remain anchored in the transnationally arbitrated circulation of norms and values. This typical tension shown in American elites paid increasing attention to the vernacular forms of thought and art developing after the Civil War, and by the early 20th century American thinkers such

as Lewis Mumford were beginning to draw out these forms and make the case for them to be acknowledged as products of domestic cultural refinement on par with the academy-sanctioned. As the 'subject' of American art and culture diversified- from Whitman's prioritization of the democratic spirit of the American working class, to Alfred Stieglitz's photographs of the New York poor, new media forms and artistic practices began to move away from the aesthetics of the 'Classics' towards capturing the aesthetics of an urbanizing, chaotic and mechanizing society. These changes- in the imagination and focus of artistic and cultural producers-, as demonstrated in the last chapter, are situated within a broader inter-class and cross-class aesthetic contestation over the norms and values of a rapidly modernizing society.

The uniqueness of the American experience, I argue here, is the particular manner in which these discordant 'cultures' were synthesized in the mass persuasion complex of the Sloanist political-economic formation. And in line with Benjamin's argument in the *Work of Art,* it is proposed that mass reproducibility of these art forms- a branch of which carried out the *imagization* of the contradictions of modernity- facilitated the co-ordination of 'fashionable' styles, artistic trends, and 'modernist' manners and lifestyles that celebrated both individuality and the idea of upward social mobility. The triumph of these ideas in terms of *culturally legitimating* mass market society were not a result of a 'top-down' dissemination of norms and values from elite classes, but rather represent the ongoing aesthetic challenges to those norms and values.

Given the period of study, and the necessity of isolating key actors and practices, I will first elucidate on the 'vernacular' culture of art and engineering that developed in the 19th century. When one thinks of the mass production factory as embodied by the River Rouge and Highland plants of the Ford Corporation, it is not only that the designs of the site themselves were the completion of a long process of perfecting simple, efficient assembly line engineering, but the *imagization* of these, by Charles Sheeler, was able to tap into an aesthetic appreciation of efficiency and sleek, simple design that can be traced to the settlement and conquest of the West.

4.2 American Culture and Art: Tensions between the Vernacular and the Worldly

In *Made In America*, John Atlee Kouwenhoven argues that the traditional idea that American art is an extension of that produced by Western European civilization refuses to acknowledge the vernacular forms of cultural production. Rather than the art and culture itself being *inherited* from Europe, it was the 'exacting cultural standards and criterion through which art is regarded and judged by.'[260]

The pursuit of ideals of simplicity in the United States always co-existed uneasily with the *material demonstration of wealth* by individuals or social groups, whose fashions and styles were, like in Europe, *aesthetic* markers of upward social mobility. David E. Shi traces this tension throughout the history of European settlement in the United States, from the pre-revolutionary era. From the Puritans and Quakers through to the 'Patrician' and 'Progressive' era, continual admonitions against materialism by ministers, magistrates and politicians who preached the 'universality of plain living,'[261] were counteracted in the everyday life by practices of outlandish lifestyles. The font on which they preached, which 'provided a mythic idiom for nurturing moral concern and social revival that has proved both durable and influential, if not entirely reliable,'[262] at the time offered a convincing case for settlers fleeing religious persecution in the Old World, but even by 1651 in the Massachusetts Bay Colony, 'the emerging Boston merchant classes especially chafed under the restrictions placed on their business and personal habits. Successful merchants, artisans and traders struggles with the conflict inherent in a communal ethic that stressed both hard work and simple living.'[263]

As such, from the outset, a 'double-standard' existed in the United States that simultaneously celebrated plain and simple living on the one hand, and sought to emulate the 'worldly' fashions of Western European parlour culture on the other. This can be traced even within the pre-revolutionary circulation of lifestyle pamphlets or 'conduct literature,' designed to provide emerging middle classes (that is to say in the United States, not property-owning classes, but occupationally non-manual) with a guide for acting in the correct manner; Hemphill argues that this interest in manners is an expression of a culture that *saw itself* as

[260] Kouwenhoven, John Atlee *Made in America: The Arts in Modern Civilization*, New York: Doubleday & Co., 1948, pg. 51
[261] Shi, David E. *The Simple Life: Plain Living and High Thinking in American Culture*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985, pg. 15
[262] Ibid., pg 18.
[263] Ibid., pg.14

middle class, establish a powerful discursive and aesthetic ideational framework of social mobility.[264] We must also take care to situate this is in a recognition of what 'middle class' means in the US. Though occupational roles have played a part in attempts to concretize the category, Hemphill also highlights that even in the late 18th century, 'fixation on occupation denies the a truth recognized by an earlier generation of historians who insisted on the middle class *character* of this society, and who noted that the groups of farmers, artisans, merchants and professionals *all* included persons who were poor, persons who were rich, and many of middling means.'[265] As such, we might think of the *aesthetic* challenges amongst the 'middling sort' as reflecting the tension between attempts to *be recognized* as middle class- through the uptake of manners and consumption of particular artefacts of fashion and culture- and the *moral* attempts (traced back through the Puritan and Quaker heritage) to be seen to abide by codes of conduct and lifestyle that were simple, austere and materially undemonstrative. As will be argued in Chapter 5, it is precisely this tension that works its way into the mass persuasion complex of the early 20th century, with Calvin Coolidge's stage-managed election campaign by Edward Bernays illustrating this dialectic of simplicity (ascribed to the character of Coolidge as a simple, hard-working American 'everyman') and material celebration (ascribed to the *manner* in which Bernays mobilised the latest celebrities, fashions and styles to support the campaign).

Given this tension, I would propose that the idea of an 'authentic,' autonomously developed American art can only be made appreciable by *constantly* situating it within a transnational body of ideas, styles and cultural practices. The aesthetic parameters of this style, Kouwenhoven argues, were created and maintained by European bourgeois elites during the course of the 19th century during the struggle for supremacy and wresting political hegemony away from the *ancien regime*. Nevertheless, cultural ideals that 'resided' in the previous social formations continued to influence the developments of the late 19th and early 20th century through this transnational circulation.As such, European art and culture as we understand is properly the product of the social and material conditions of Western Europe from the late Middle Ages to the onset of industrialization, one accordingly rooted in the agriculture and the handicrafts, with attitudes towards beauty and sublimity also shaped by

[264] 'Middle Class Rising in Revolutionary America: The Evidence from Manners,' C. Dallett Hemphill in *Journal of Social History, 30:2* (1996), pg. 317
[265] Ibid., pg 318.

the tenuous preservation of a Greco-Roman substratum in the *urbes* of Northern and Central Italy, its inheritance through Catholicism and finally the Protestant rupture.[266]

American culture, on the other hand, received these sensibilities but did not confront the same social and material conditions that produced them in Europe; yet they were left with the residual criterion of European artistic judgement despite having to undertake new socio-economic practices that stimulated a *techno-scientific* [267]mindset. This likewise happened in Europe, but having already 'developed' their art and culture to a sufficient degree, the 19th century was therefore characterised by the dissemination of these standards across an increasingly volatile and self-recognising mass society. In the States, the techno-scientific mindset meant that an *authentic* American art would develop under these conditions; industry and science and the racial, ethnic and industrial class division (Kitsch, Vernacular) would contribute to the forging of an authentic American by the 1920s, one where the domain of art itself shifts, and requires a new lexicon and criterion of judgement to find out what Americans actually appreciate artistically.

"*For a hundred and fifty years the historians and critics of American culture have, in effect, been applying the established western European criteria of value to the products of a civilization which has had less and less in common with that which produced the forms and techniques from which those criteria were deduced. To the cultural achievements, and specifically the arts of a civilization whose dynamics originate in the technology and science, they have sought to apply the standards which were appropriate to those of civilizations founded upon agriculture or handicraft commerce.*"[268]

The next stage of the argument is to develop the 'vernacular,' those artistic and creative techniques/form that belong to the people. They are the 'products of a unique kind of folk art, created under conditions which had never before existed.'[269] Vernacular refers to 'unself-conscious efforts of common people to create satisfying patterns out of the elements of their environment.'[270] However, it is not to be regarded as the products of communities that have been 'cut off' (e.g., Pennsylvania Dutch), but the art of a 'sovereign, uncultivated people.'

[266] Rookmaaker, HR *Modern Art and the Death of Culture*, Crossway, 1994, pg. 14
[267]Kouwenhoven, John Atlee *Made in America: The Arts in Modern Civilization*, New York: Doubleday & Co., 1948, pg. 13
[268] Ibid., pg. 15
[269] Ibid.
[270] Ibid.

"*In their purest form these patterns comprise the folk arts of the first people in history who, disinherited of a great cultural tradition, found themselves living under democratic institutions in an expanding machine economy.*"[271]

This assertion of artistic and cultural endeavour 'from below,' correlates with the relatively unhindered civil space that developed in the United States under Lockean conditions of private property and the sense of individual freedom. The settlement of the West produced unique social conditions, that, unlike the older cities of the eastern coast where 'urbanization, commercialism, and cosmopolitanism were also combining to introduce diversity into the heretofore homogenous social order,'[272] facilitated the development of a vernacular aesthetic that was detached from the ornamented styles in architecture and fashion that adorned the elites and rising 'middling' sort of the developing cities of the East. As such I would argue that 'Cultural Hegemony' in the United States, whilst anchored in the Patrician or Custodian elites of the East Coast, was never quite all encompassing (in the sense of defining the values and norms of culture) to overcome the voices of subordinate groups. Even in the early 20th century, in the depths of racial tension and clear, nationally articulated policies of discrimination, the *New Negro* movement managed to make itself heard and respected through the Harlem Renaissance.[273]

Yet it is also in these Lockean conditions that ideas of commercialism and materialism began to flourish as a *culture*. The townhall character of early 19th century American socio-political life began to be displaced in the antebellum years as 'ships brought not only new goods but new people and new ideas,'[274] presumably for the same reasons- religious freedom, perceptions of mobility and opportunities to create wealth- that the original settlers had arrived for. And 'in the process, the original medieval impulse toward a consensual communalism was gradually displaced by a more modern Lockean individualism.'[275] As such, the 'communal' outlook of the early era, which apparently prioritized equality amongst social groups and transcendence of the social hierarchies that plagued the Old World had its roots in the ideals of the medieval Guild system of European mercantile cities. This

[271] Ibid.
[272] Shi, David E. *The Simple Life: Plain Living and High Thinking in American Culture*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985, pg. 19
[273] Osofsky, Gilbert *Harlem: The Making of a Ghetto: Negro New York, 1890-1930*, New York: Harper and Row, 1971, pg. 33
[274] Shi, David E. *The Simple Life: Plain Living and High Thinking in American Culture*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985, pg.19
[275] Ibid.

'medievalism' returns as a *transnational* movement in the Arts and Crafts Movements of England, Germany and the United States.

However, problems of historical reflection means that these authentic moments are ignored in the wider intellectual and cultural pursuit of attaining comparable artistic status to European counterparts; 'no one bothers to note the patterns of colors, shapes, sounds and ideas which plain people produce.'[276]Kouwenhoven's 'vernacular' art of America therefore develops in the *material* conditions of the frontier; adaptation and innovative use of resources that 'was likely to be marked by simplicity. There was no room in such a tradition for the ornate, and it was merely sound sense to design a thing as economically as one could.'[277]

In tracing the development of American vernacular art, Kouwenhoven emphasizes 'pastoral simplicity and efficient design,' in the 'axes, hatchets, picks and shovels,' that were used in the encounter with the American natural environment. Whilst they were 'not pleasing to the eye,' the core values emerging from the making of these tools finds its apogee in the Corliss Steam Engine, first shown at the Centennial Exhibition's Machinery Hall, where it was 'gracious' enough to stand side by side with European counterparts. The tradition that 'had to have machines and tools that would work well in a rough land, would economize labor and would save the owner from running to far-off shops for repairs,' meant a predilection for light and simple tools, which were reflected in the *form*. An engine of that size had 'long been customary for the designers to strive for architectural or other ornamental effects.' The Corliss had a spartan, almost severe design, that exhibited clumsiness, and 'looked much better in motion that it did when standing still.' Nevertheless, the Corliss received exalted reviews from visitors, attracted to the very things that made it appear grotesque according to the generally accepted criterions of industrial design at the time. [278]

Kouvenhowen asserts that the next stage of the vernacular tradition finds its expression in 'empirical engineering,' one with 'no tradition, no codified grammar, of technological design, but only an intuitive sense of appropriate form.' The focus remains on intuition, adopting original methods of design and patterning, and an aesthetic development of 'economy of line,

[276]Kouwenhoven, John Atlee *Made in America: The Arts in Modern Civilization*, New York: Doubleday & Co., 1948, pg. 20
[277] Ibid. Pg 28
[278] Ibid.,pg 28

lightness, strength and freedom from meaningless ornament.'[279] As such 'The characteristics of economy, simplicity, flexibility with the products of the vernacular displayed so clearly in the United States are closely related to the design of the American system of industrial production itself.'[280] In this way, the role of industrialization *and* westward expansion in the United States, which ascribe a perpetual quality of a society constantly on the move and traversing the boundaries of space and time, give rise to an appreciation of the *aesthetic value of efficiency*:

"*A living organism of industry, all compact of social values, may be truly an aesthetic whole. It may have beauty transcending a multitude of partial uglinesses, not because it is good, but because its excellence shows the form of perfect unity. That harmony of potent action, that blending of mutual influences, which, in symphony or drama, makes it difficult to disentangle cause and effect, is an unfailing mark, in the conduct of life no less, of the presence of the aesthetic quality.*"[281]

To stress again, this appreciation of efficiency- and an *aesthetic* that apprehends engineering and mechanized industry as *cultural* products, rather than external forces created by science and economy- must be located within a broader transnational arc of artistic and cultural judgement *into which that aesthetic of efficiency could be ascribed virtue and beauty*. The flipside to this is where the tools and products of an 'engineering culture' are judged by artistic and cultural criteria that distinguishes specific spheres of production. In this schema, the kind of vernacular developments taking place in the United States are not understood for their cultural or artistic worth; rather, once they have made themselves (and thought about as) the forces of mechanized economic transformation, they are culturally vilified as a part of a *deus ex machina* of modernity and modernization, an unstoppable force seemingly out of control of human action, ideas and practice.[282]

Kouwenhoven argues that the lineage of the vernacular American art in industrial design produced what we now understand as 'mass production.' Eli Whitney, in 1798, manufactured 10,000 rifles in two years, an unprecedented amount for the time, where there was a lack of skilled gunsmiths. The system of machine-made, standardized and interchangeable parts was of 'primary importance in the history of modern civilization,' by the early 1870s, the system had been so extensively applied in different industries that 600,000 sewing machines were

[279] Ibid., pg. 32
[280] Ibid.
[281] 'The Aesthetic Value of Efficiency,' Ethel Power Howes in *The Atlantic Monthly* (1912 vol. 2), pg.81
[282] Hence the unity of reaction against modernization from both dominant, Custodian groups as well as left-wing thinkers.

made and sold in a single year. The 'American System of Manufactures,' the precursor to Fordism, for Kouwenhoven, strengthened and accentuated the characteristic qualities of American vernacular tradition; and furthermore if rifles, reapers, sewing machines and watches had not *already* been characterized by simplicity and plainness, it would have been difficult to imagine the system developing in the first place, or at least more problematic to apply.[283]

The developments in American manufacturing systems, and the rapidity in which it spread was also to do with how power was transmitted from a prime mover (steam engine, water wheel, turbine) to the different machines within the factory. In 1841, Robert Willis observed that in Britain, it was dispersed by long shafts and toothed gear wheels, whereas in America it was in large-belts, moving rapidly and quietly.[284] This system of pulleys and belts was less rigid than the toothed-wheel transmission, and its flexibility meant the arrangement machinery could be changed with considerable freedom- which became more important after the introduction of the new system of interchangeable parts. Kouwenhoven argues that the modern system of mass production is the unification of the system of interchangeable parts (developed by Whitney) and the mechanical handling system developed by Oliver Evans as far back as 1785. Their twin contributions- to the very design of the industrial structure itself- eventually lead to its unification by Henry Ford, the 'modern system of power-driven assembly line manufacture.'[285]

The rise of the system of mass production as a *cultural artefact* in itself, I argue has consequences for the shaping of any *hegemonic* political-economic system created around it, and particularly the aesthetic consequences of a system whose 'abstract qualities having influenced every aspect of life in the twentieth century, drastically altering the material and social texture of Western life.'[286]

Having noted the tension between a developing vernacular culture and the criterion of aesthetic judgement held by the Custodian elites of the Eastern cities, we will now turn to how *reactive* aesthetic contestations took place once observers became more aware of the

[283] Kouwenhoven, John Atlee *Made in America: The Arts in Modern Civilization*, New York: Doubleday & Co., 1948, pg. 39
[284] Ibid., pg. 65
[285] Ibid., pg. 41
[286] Batchelor, Ray *Henry Ford: Mass Production, Modernism and Design*, Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1994, pg. 8

economic and social effects of industrializing society. As I have tried to suggest, these reactions varied in their critical purchase. Some associated these developments with the rise of large corporations and directed their criticisms towards the agents of organized capitalism; others, more sanguine, looked towards the political system to correct the perceived ills. I will go on to argue, then, that the *reactive* (or 'antimodern' as Jackson Lears deems) ideas of the Arts and Crafts movements posit (despite often being fused with Socialistic and counter-hegemonic rhetoric) themselves antagonistically against the rise of machine production, not because of the alienation of individual workers from the production process (as generally understood in the Marxian sense), but because of a *refusal to grasp the emancipatory underpinning of a system that developed precisely because of a celebration of worker ingenuity in the aesthetic of efficiency*. As such, the machine-driven path towards mass production as manifested in Ford's River Rouge and the Highland Plant in the 1910s and 1920s was the *culmination* of a vernacular culture that appreciated beauty and sublimity in the *materiality*, design and tools of building that society, reflecting a cultural development in which the distance from central political and cultural authority allowed a space in which a developing art and culture could develop its own aesthetic parameters of judgement, divorced to a certain extent from the Atlantic circulation of bourgeois norms and values.

4.3 Transnationalizing Modernity I: Foundations in Thought and Practice

Writers like Edward Bellamy captured this disquieting era of rapid social transformation by thinking 'out a logical conclusion for the processes of mechanical organization and monopoly, for the national expansion of great industries like steel and the stockyards, that were taking place under men's noses.'[287] Fused with a conception of a fair, communal society that had abolished private property, Bellamy's Utopian vision in *Looking Backward* nonetheless *assumes* both the development of mechanized industrial forces and techno-scientific planning and administration that would infuse the Stalinist mass industrialization of the Soviet Union a few decades later. Bellamy, like English critics John Ruskin and William Morris, rarely acknowledged the social relations that had engineered those possibilities in the first place, nor the active contribution of workers to shaping the onset of mass industrial society. Rather, they witnessed first hand perceived ills that they *blamed* on the rise of the machine age. Startled at its possibilities, yet fearful of the long term consequences that

[287]Mumford, Lewis *The Brown Decades: A Study of the Arts in America, 1865-1895* , New York: Dover Publications, 1955, pg. 48

machine-led production would have on the deskilled workers, Ruskin and Morris initiated a discourse of ideas and practices within the realm of factory production that spread rapidly around the advanced industrial nations of the period.

As an idea, rather than a specific and historical system of factory production, mass production embodies a range of preoccupations central to the Modern perspective, particular with regard to the potential perfectibility of machine production and form-giving. The British Arts and Crafts movement for example expressed hostility toward the idea of moving toward a machine-based system of production, though their concerns appear to have undergone some kind of reconciliation in both Germany and the US. Producers gradually begun working with machines to produce luxury goods, believing that the machine would help the individual craftsmen produce harmonious form; critics and designers alike sensed that the artist had a 'duty to supervise and encourage the production of sober, machine-made forms which would, in turn, foster a stable , orderly society sharing *common values*.[288]

These common values, I argue, are grounded in the way the *art* of a particular period is used to 'judge' the society in which it is produced. The task to undertake during the decades leading to the Sloanist political-economy, is to understand the way in which the *perception of art*, i.e., what constituted an art form, changed accordingly with the socio-economic and cultural conditioning of the United States. In the previous section, it is established that the specificity of 19th century development in the US produced an *aesthetic of efficiency* in which the products of mechanical engineering were ascribed artistic qualities. We must also situate this within the cross- and inter-class aesthetic contestation over norms and values evaluated in Chapter 3, which gives rise to a tension between aesthetic judgement based on 19th century bourgeois values against the emergent aesthetic of modernity and modernization. The perspective argued by Raymond Williams is that Ruskin and Morris see art and culture as emerging organically *within* social relations (similar to Kouwenhoven's narrative of American vernacular art), as opposed to be directed from 'above,' i.e., from ruling elites.[289] I would add that the role of the *aesthetic* here is to mediate that tension between that art and culture produced independently from specific, hierarchical social relations on the one hand, and the *idea* of art and culture as envisioned by ruling, or Custodian elites on the other.

[288] Batchelor, Ray *Henry Ford: Mass Production, Modernism and Design*, Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1994, pg. 95

277 Williams, Raymond *Culture and Society, 1780-1950*, London: Penguin Books, 1963, pg. 137

As a reaction to the encroaching mechanization of production in mid 19th century England, Ruskin's 'political economy of art,' separates two kinds of *beauty*: *typical* and *vital*. Firstly, a 'typical' beauty, that refers to the external qualities of bodies and objects, that can be judged beautiful or not according to 'universal' principles, where an artwork is imbued with 'the grace of divine attributes.'[290] This conception of the aesthetic, I suggest, is bound to the ideals of aestheticism that emerged from bourgeois attempts to ground a universally applicable set of criterion through which the judgement of art could take place. As an increasingly formalised branch of art criticism, this kind of conception of beauty *negates* the possibility of vernacular forms of art being considered canonical and therefore unrepresentative of the Divine. The second that Ruskin describes is 'vital' beauty, 'the feliticious fulifillment of function in living things more especially of the joyful and right exertion of perfect life in man.'[291] As opposed to the universalist Divine judgement reserved for typical beauty, Ruskin's conception of 'vital' beauty speaks to the role of the design and function of things and how they contribute to the fulfillment of human existence. It is this idea of beauty that would later form the basis of the Bauhaus project under Walter Gropius in the Weimar era in Germany; in the United States, no equivalent project of apparent ideological cohesion emerged with enduring influence precisely because that conception of 'vital' beauty was already inscribed into the vernacular development of art and culture in the United States, though it still had to contend with the 'universal' or 'typical' judgements of beauty held by Custodian elites who mediated the *transnational* circulation of bourgeois aesthetics within American discourses of democracy, manifest destiny, social mobility and the promise of abundance.

"*The art of any country is the exponent of its social and political virtues. The art or general productive and formative energy of any country is an exact exponent of its ethical life.*"[292]

Williams argues that Ruskin's ideas of vital beauty were anchored in the ideal of the perfectibility of mankind, and how design and form could exert on that process. Ruskin's conservative critique of 19th century laissez-faire capitalism- the 'organic society'- was premised upon a Utopian vision of collective legislation, and as such his critique struck chords with both socialists as well as Custodian mentalities; that is to say, the ideas of design

[290] Ibid., pg 141
[291] Ibid.
[292] Ibid., pg. 142

and function that underpinned the critique were still based on a quasi-authoritarian ideal of class hierarchization.[293] The 'organic' society appealed to both conservative and Marxist thinkers of the time, as it dispensed with ideals of equal distribution of wealth in favour of an 'interdependence and interrelation between industrial classes.'[294] In the realm of conservative thought, it led to a critique of 'men in industrial production,' for which the 'cash-nexus' was the only active relation; this critique was typically employed by Custodian, old-moneyed classes. For the critique eventually expounded by Marxists, the 'organic' society became the basis for its attack on industrial capitalism *as a whole* and the limitations of 19th century 'triumphant middle-class liberalism.'[295] However, the difference in the United States (as more fully explored in Chapter 3) was that this 'triumphant middle-class liberalism,' was not shaking off the bondages of residual gentry power, but rather the dominant mindset that united a variety of social groups that in Europe at the same time would not have been deemed as 'middle-class.'

The very 'idea of culture,' according to Raymond Williams and Terry Eagleton, is something that was a product of Western European socio-economic transformations in the 19th century. This is not to suggest that there was a causal link between the changes initiated by the Industrial revolution and the transformation of culture; but rather the *terms* and *parameters* of judgement of cultural products and practices were intimately linked to the way in which writers like John Ruskin and William Morris characterised and ascribed civilizational standards to artworks and cultural objects. Furthermore, a keen focus on architectural standards and more broadly those creative outlets that contributed to the *building* of society show for Raymond Williams that that intimate, dialectical connection between culture and political-economy is mediated according to the manner in which writers, practioners and idealogues (all three in the case of Ruskin and Morris) *apprehended* their built environment and the discourses of social change that accompanied and influenced it. In this sense, for Ruskin and Morris:

"*Political Economy was neither an art nor a science, but a system of conduct and legislature, founded on the sciences* ***but directed by the arts***."[296]

[293] Ibid., pg. 146
[294] Ibid.,
[295] Ibid
[296] Ibid., pg. 148

It is a vision of political-economy that acknowledges its basis in science and rationality, and one grounded in particular forms of emergent state power- but also one that co-exists with the arts and culture. The problem posed by this is *how* political-economy is directed by the arts, and if it is, in what way does art and culture- that according to Eagleton, the 'aesthetic; acts as a reservoir for non-alienated modes of cognition[297]- reveal or conceal the contradictions of political economy?

In this respect, it is important to highlight the *reactive* nature of Ruskin's thought- for it is in the inherent conservatism of these ideas relating to culture and political economy that made it *vulnerable* to legitimizing the forms of production and consumption that he directed his critique against; this is something shared by the Bauhaus and avant-garde modernists in the United States at during the 1920s and 30s. Ruskin had a particular vision for the social hierarchization at the apex of which would be a benevolent, aristocratic ruling class composed of Landowners, followed by a second estate of merchants and manufacturers and a third estate of scholars and artists. The function of each of these was also well defined- the goal of the landowning aristocracy was to 'ensure order among inferiors,'; the merchants and manufacturers were there to 'initiate honest production and just distribution,'; and the scholars and artists in their ideational and aesthetic capacities were to 'develop wise consumption through the training of taste.'[298]

The role of the scholar-artist social class is of special importance to us; for it resonates with the Custodian attitude of spreading refinement of manners and tastes through vertical dissemination in a society where everyone knew their place. Yet the idea of 'training of taste,' was also part of the fabric of rise of self-help books and lifestyle magazines that were mass circulated in the United States. Lippmann argues that the very health of democratic society was at stake because of the lifestyles were being sold, with the implication of individuals being able to 'consume status.'[299] Both the Custodian vision of disseminating culture from above and the modern, media driven ideals of consuming status through adoption of certain manners, behaviours and the consumption of fashions and good are underpinned the assumption that the possession of certain goods or emulation of lifestyles represented an *upward shift through the hierarchy of society and culture*. The crucial

[297] Eagleton, Terry *The Ideology of the Aesthetic*, Oxford: Blackwell, 1990, pg. 9
[298] Williams, Raymond *Culture and Society, 1780-1950*, London: Penguin Books, 1963,pg. 152.
[299] Lippmann, Walter *Public Opinion*, London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd, 1929, pg. 14

difference is that under conditions of Custodian cultural authority, the strength of the idea of upward social mobility is counteracted by the rigid structure of society; under conditions of mass reproducibility and dissemination of media and cultural literature, the concept of an individual moving upward through social classes encounters less resistance, situated as it was during the era of the breakdown of Custodian cultural hegemony and the rise of diversified cultures. This uneasy tension, I believe is precisely what Walter Benjamin elucidates in the *Work of Art*: that despite the removal of 'aura' and the authenticity of art, mass reproducibility itself transforms the parameters of social hierarchy, providing the scope for subordinate classes to pursue their social and cultural goals through the mass consumption of culture. The ideas of Ruskin, despite his preference for a vertically and rigidly organized society, opens up the idea that 'vital' beauty- that which fulfills happiness in the individual- can be interpreted by anyone for their *own interests, aspirations and conceptions of beauty*. I would assert that this ideational strand continues through to early 20th century avant-garde modernism, with its focus on interpersonal subjectivities and the challenges they presented to both academy-sanctioned 'high art,' as well their reactive disparaging of the 'lowbrow,' kitsch products of mass cultural production.[300]

If Ruskin opened up a key discourse relating to culture and political economy, Williams asserts that the work of William Morris, and his sensitivity to the working classes in England, initiated a *transnational* circulation of ideas and practices of *how to respond to the encroaching domination of the machine in production*. Beginning with the Arts and Crafts movement in England (which also influenced American workers), and moving through the German Werkbund to the final relocation of the Bauhaus in the United States, it will be argued that despite being driven by Utopian, Socialistic ideals of how best to design and produce the built and imagized environment for the betterment of humankind, the forms, styles and techniques of these movements unwittingly legitimated the rise of mass consumption society in the United States, *precisely because those forms tapped into the ideal of upward social mobility* that I argued in the previous chapter predominated during the aesthetic contestations over values and norms between and within changing structures of class and class consciousness.

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[300]Cooper, John Xiros *Modernism and the Culture of Market Society*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004, pg. 10

Morris' departure point from Ruskin is that he believed that art 'is the cause of the people,'[301] and that it represented an ontologically unique way of conceptualizing the 'progress of society.' Art, for Morris did not stand particularly for the improvement of working conditions nor could it be used to reveal a future system of a more equally distributive system of wealth. Rather, his project was about 'winning back Art, that is to say, the pleasure of life; win back Art again to our daily labor.'[302] Morris also advocated a retreat away from machine production, and believed in a somewhat romantic restoration of the medieval guild system. Williams argues that as a result of his idealization of a society without machines, his vision of the Arts and Crafts movement was *compensatory* and *sentimental*; or a refusal to confront realistically the transformations in production at the time. Walter Benjamin, on the other hand, was much more sensitive to the reality of mechanical reproduction and the potentials it might open up for subordinate classes to realize their cultural, political and socio-economic interests. For Benjamin, I argue, the mechanically reproducible art was *the only way possible that working people could have 'won back Art'*, but as opposed to Morris, this can only occur *under conditions of commodified consumption and mass reproducibility*, rather than within the labour process itself. The problem opened up by this discourse on *art* and *political economy* is whether 'art' and 'culture' *produce* an ideal society, or whether 'art' and 'culture' are consumable as lifestyles that *also express the political aspirations of the idealized society*- one in the United States I have asserted was anchored in the idealization of upward social mobility.

4.4 Transnationalizing Modernity II: Entering the 20th century

The Arts and Crafts movement inspired by Ruskin's writings and instigated by Morris began in earnest in Britain after 1860. Concentrating initially on household objects, textiles and decorative forms such as wallpaper, the ideals of simplicity and craftsmanship (with minimal ornamentation drawn from folk arts or romantic styles such as those advocated by the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood) soon extended into larger architectural projects, culminating in the 'Garden Cities' movement of Ebenezer Howard. The common bond of the British Arts and Crafts movement was a perceived anti-industrialism, concern for the degradation of worker's lives in industrial conditions, and concern for their alienation from culture and the products of

[301] Williams, Raymond *Culture and Society, 1780-1950*, London: Penguin Books, 1963, pg. 158
[302] Ibid., pg. 160

culture.[303] However, even Morris' own company set up in 1861 to provide employment for traditional craftsmen came undone by the reality of the competitive capitalist market; Whitford argues that the original ideological impulse was compromised because these attempts *to stem the tide of machine-led industrialization* were i) impractical in the sense that craftsmen's products were more expensive than mass-produced ones, and could only be afforded precisely by the social class of 'swinish' rich that had the least need for them; cottage industries' survival was thus dependent upon the patronage by the bourgeois, even though the idea and value placed on craftsmen's products were thought to accrue and be appreciated by the 'ordinary people.' And ii) they were naive in the sense that they drew their ideational power from 'imagined' rather than authentic Middle Age guild systems, in which mechanization was not even a possibility.[304] I would argue that therefore, the *reaction to modernization under machine-led conditions* forms the primary ideational 'condition' that underpins later aesthetic transformation. The critique is not directed *per se* at capitalist social relations, but rather than an exogenous rendition of industrialization as 'deus ex machina,' in which art and design can serve a corrective function against the social and cultural issues wrought by rapid modernization. Through greater focus on thought and practice, art and design may also develop into a *transformatory* or *emancipatory* contemporary force, as long as the potential of the machine is grasped and mobilised for the purposes of human good. As artists, it is vital to take note and theoretically incorporate the *utopian* aspect of their initial phase- driven not by revolutionary fervour nor compliant accommodation, but recognising broad potentialities for the improvement of the human condition through the role of art and design; as such these utopian visions work themselves into the *aesthetic* of the modernity, and thereby hold in its *production* (not consumption) the ideals and values assigned to 'human improvement' by the artists.

Whilst the Arts and Crafts movement did not have ultimate success in stemming the tide of machine-led industrialization, the ideas *and* products (particularly in housing) had an enduring influence in Continental Europe, where the not always thoroughly elaborated ideational dimension of Ruskin and Morris found a more explicit revolutionary voice through the Bauhaus School. Whitford argues that the admiration for British Arts and Crafts in industrial products, craft schools, garden cities and modern domestic architecture was an expression of the industrial and mercantile power it demonstrated in its global power. With

[303] Whitford, Frank *Bauhaus*, Thames and Hudson, 1984, pg. 14
[304] Ibid., pg. 15

Germany and France looking to emulate Britain in the international system, the *aesthetic* produced by the Arts and Crafts found favour amongst both craft manufacturers and political leaders alike in the Continent.[305] It is therefore of some curiosity that at the very moment that British global political-economy hegemony (one that was possible precisely because of rapid industrialization and mechanization) began to be meaningfully challenged (from the early 1880s onwards), the *aesthetic* expression of that power- that is to say, the styles that contenders considered to be worth aesthetically emulating- was derived partly from a movement that was premised on hostility for the system of production underpinning it.

The *Wiener Werkstatte*, established in 1903 followed the ideological example of the British Arts and Crafts movement, concerned with 'revitalizing the architecture, crafts, painting and sculptures from the shackles of historicism,' but moved away from the medievalist, folk ornamentation of Morris. Craft workshops that produced furniture and textiles for sale in their own store, and provided training and support for its artists and craftsmen stressed simple and geometric forms.[306] Galvanised by the arrival of Adolf Loos, who ideologically and aesthetically justified the *Werkstatte* focus on stylistic anonymity and nonexistent ornamentation in the 1908 essay 'Ornament and Culture,' the continental approach by 1910 stressed the values of Arts and Crafts but with a *reconciliation* with mechanization, and admittance of the unstoppable force characterized by modernization. For Loos, the 'greater the decoration, the greater the exploitation of the employed craftsmen,'[307] and associated the *ornamentation* of products with both the conspicuous consumption of bourgeois classes *as well as* the kitsch tastes of the ever increasing white collar classes.

A more coherent focus began to develop around the design and form of 'objects that express the qualities of the materials in which they were made.'[308] Loos also acknowledged that there was no point in creating an ideology of craftsmanship if the products of that craft were not affordable by the bulk of the working masses, and in the context of emergent forms of mass reproducibility, Hermann Muthesius switched the focus of Arts and Crafts towards a complete embracing of the machine- declaring that ornamentation and mechanization were

[305] Ibid., pg 6
[306] Ibid., pg. 10
[307] Ibid., pg. 12
[308] Ibid.

irreconcilable and that machine products were ideal for the working masses as they were 'smooth form reduced to its essential function.'[309]

The realization, then, of the necessity of mass reproducibility for providing cheaply available, but well designed and formed products, led to a further alliance, or set of compromises with the key agents for which the machine-led industrialization reaped material rewards- the capitalist themselves. The German *Werkbund* was founded in 1907 by twelve artists and twelve industrialists, aimed at reconciliation of art, craft, industry and trade, and a specific focus on improving the quality of *German* products as a state-sponsored attempt to compete with British household products. Though the *Werkbund* shared with the Arts and Crafts movement a concern for people's relationship to the product (its ability to aesthetically fulfil the pleasure outlined by Ruskin's vital beauty), the foundation itself had accepted industrialism and capitalism as realities that design and form must adjust toward, and at best hope to placate the potential extremities of alienation from product that they believed would entail. This relationship, of a movement that had in its origins in a counter-hegemonic impulse that was simultaneously *reactive* and *progressive* in nature, to the broader capitalist reformations of the 'managerial revolution,' found *Werkbund* founder Peter Behrens being appointed chief designer of AEG in 1907.[310] Behrens' vision completes the move from the antimodern framing of Ruskin and Morris' ideas to a modernist concern that was 'consciously seeking and finding the first ways to the reunification of the work of work with the creative artists,' and asking 'whether and when it will be possible to transform the great technical achievements of our age into the expression of a mature, elevated art.'[311]

The Bauhaus School was founded by *Werkbund* member Walter Gropius in 1919, supported by the Weimar governments whose initial liberal and social democrat composition afforded the original ideas of the *Werkbund* a state-funded privilege and national recognition. Despite inheriting the *Werkbund*'s concern of synthesizing artistic craft and capitalist industry, the socio-political climate of early Weimar Germany saw an increasing willingness of artists to showcase explicit concern with *their* relationships to the social and political environment. Receiving inspiration from the Expressionist and Dada movements, Bauhaus artists shaped their art in terms of *social and political-economic revolution* using the school in its early

[309] Ibid.
[310] Ibid.
[311] Ibid., pg. 22

period as springboard to mobilize revolutionary consciousness- similar in vein, to the Marxist aesthetics elaborated by Georg Lukacs. The 'artist-intellectuals' of early Weimar Germany believed that their art should be 'motivated by a desire for reform, transformation and breaking through the limits of cultural norms and embedded social value systems that prioritized authority, duty, and the virtual elimination of possibilities for change within the existing system.'[312] Nevertheless, their focus on individual ambition and continual innovation of styles and forms left them bereft of the social activism that would necessitate those changes. Retreating into a world of individual ambivalence, the Bauhaus further suffered from internal dissent and faced severe economic crises from 1923 onward; by 1925 and its forced relocation to Dessau (after the Thuringian State government refused to sanction funding due to the polarizing political climate), the Bauhaus under Hannes Mayer began to tailor its teaching to the demands of industry.[313] Yet despite the perpetual requirement to compromise beliefs and ideas due to the necessity of survival (a common theme, alas, amongst modernists from all nations during this period), the significance of Bauhaus is that they 'created patterns and set the standard of present day industrial design; it helped to invent modern architecture; it altered the look of everything from the chair you are sitting on to the page you are reading now.'[314] In short, the aesthetics of design and form produced by the Bauhaus entered the grammar of hegemony under *Sloanist* conditions of mass production and mass consumption. The details of their design were motivated by *utopian* concerns to create better living conditions for the working masses.[315] They were also motivated by a desire to fulfill the 'pleasure' of life that art and culture promise.

Despite the revolutionary impulse of the Bauhaus, the rapid integration of their forms (in architecture), styles (in typefaces) and fashions (household object), their idea of 'unity of spirit,' captured stylistically by Lyonel Feininger's *Cathedral* (1919) resonates closely with the potentialities of mass reproducibility and consumption that Benjamin intimates. In other words, because the products of the Bauhaus style took shape during a period where mass production, mass consumption, mass reproducibility and mass persuasion- in short the coming of 'mass' society- provided the overall political-economic conditions in which their ideas could take shape and form, they *were ideally suited for integration in capitalist society*

[312]Greenberg, Allan *Dada and the Bauhaus, 1917-1925*, University Microfilms International, 1979, pg. xiii
[313]Whitford, Frank *Bauhaus*, Thames and Hudson, 1984, pg. 8
[314] Ibid., pg 10
[315] Caton, Joseph Harris *The Utopian Vision of Moholy-Nagy*, Ann Arbor: UMI Research Press, 1984, pg. 51

in America precisely because their products and ideas fitted in with the promises of mass industrial society- abundance and a sense of cultural equality.

"*This spirit of unity was not intended to be a national spirit, but a human spirit; the determining characteristics were universal, intended to transcend the artificial boundaries rooted in nationalism and the cultural straitjackets into which men are educated*."[316]

This integration of the 'world of work' with 'creative artists,' finds parallels in the United States, where modernist artists such as Edward Hopper and Alfred Stieglitz worked for advertising and public relations firms[317]; writers like Malcolm Cowley, who as a part of a generation of 'exiles' who participated in the First World War in France were exposed to the literary modernists and avant-garde of Europe, found work in tabloid magazines and newspapers, providing copy and sensationalized stories that often criticized and mocked the very bohemian circles they co-habited with.[318] Though the Arts and Crafts movement's resonance in the United States was largely limited to the architecture of Lewis Sullivan and Frank Lloyd Wright, modernist and avant-garde art, along with revolutionary politics of anarchism and Socialism infused the rise of a modernist class of writers and artists who challenged the cultural authority of the Custodian elite. The importance of this in terms of capturing the 'moment' of hegemony, is the way in which counter-hegemonic thought and practices in the domain of art and culture *contributed* to the aesthetic of hegemony. For if the products of culture and the forms through which they are disseminated through mass persuasion industries align with the aspirations of subordinate groups (again I stress that the 'aspiration' is upward social mobility, possible and realizable with the breakdown of socio-cultural hierarchy, rather than political-economic hierarchy), then the interaction of 'residual' and 'emergent' cultures with that of the dominant showcases that the political-economic formation is not driven from above. Furthermore, the *transnational* circulation of sleek, simple styles pioneered by the Bauhaus, I argue, complimented the vernacular appreciation of machine and industrial forms and structures that developed in the United States, where the products of mechanized industry were apprehended and aesthetically appreciated as *cultural artefacts* that complimented pre-existent ideals of upward social mobility, as opposed to the originating ideas of Walter Gropius. Nevertheless, the *interest* in the design and styles of Bauhaus products proliferated in the United States following the establishment of the 'New

[316] Greenberg, Allan *Dada and the Bauhaus, 1917-1925*, University Microfilms International, 1979, pg.58
[317] Smith, Terry *Making the Modern: Industry, Art and Design in America,* Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993, pg. 51
[318] Cowley, Malcolm *Exile's Return: A Literary Odyssey of the 1920s*, London: Penguin Books, 1994, pg. 72

Bauhaus' in Chicago in 1937, integrating into a recovering mass consumption economy whose products 'contains the repression and virtual disappearance of its utopian humanistic-social dimensions.'[319]

The American experience of Bauhaus was not the first nor a unilateral instance of 'German' art and architecture's influence in the US. Dankmer Adler who emigrated to the US as a child in 1854 was instrumental in establishing the Chicago school in 1881 with Louis Sullivan.[320] The work of this school was a crucial influence on the embryonic Bauhaus in Europe, particular the skyscraper visions of van der Rohe in the 20s as well as the design theory of Gropius and Meyer. Frank Lloyd Wright, who worked as an assistant to Sullivan, was likewise a tremendous influence on the early years of the Bauhaus, as attested by his visit and exhibition to Berlin in 1910. Thus we can see that the *aesthetic* encounter between two ostensible nation states was rather a multifaceted and reinforcing exchange between expert and artisanal classes, whose work and thought often transcended the limitations accorded to a supposedly 'authentic' national artistic culture- in the case of the US, at the turn of the 20th century, this had hardly been determined in any case.[321]

Therefore I would argue that the 'international' dimension of aesthetic political economy is actually the very transnational preconditions that allow the 'international' to take hold in the first place. In other words, what we believe and understand as 'American' or 'German' in this case relating to the modernist movement, was only possible and determined by an initial transnational aesthetic encounter, mutually reinforcing each other, transforming and adapting content, meaning and style until becoming solidified in their respective national consciousness via the emergent media such as film and print media that allowed a rapid dissemination to take place to the wider populations. Furthermore, the two-way transmission of ideas and practices in the domain of art challenged *embedded* notions of aesthetic judgement. In both the United States and Germany, the Bauhaus contributed to the waning of influence of styles such as Beaux-Arts, whose architecture and design was associated in America with cultural elites who still looked to 19th century European traditions for inspiration; the next section will show how a relatively small social group of American Modernists, in a short period of time, helped to a) overcome the Custodian cultural authority

[319] 'Consuming the Bauhaus,' Christina Volkmann and Christian de Cock in *Consumption, Markets and Culture* (2006, 9:2), pg. 129
[320] Kentgens-Craig, Margaret *The Bauhaus in America: First Contacts 1919-1936* , Boston: MIT Press, 1999, pg. 3
[321] Ibid., pg. 4

in the domain of art and culture, and b) unwittingly contribute their styles and techniques to the developing iconologies of Sloanism

4.5 American Modernism and its Contribution to Mass Persuasion

"*The arts defined a **quality of living** which it was the whole purpose of political change to make possible*."[322]

The recognition of the *political* qualities of art and culture, and their potential to unravel and depict the social struggles of early 20th century America shared with contemporaneous European modernism an ideological anchor in counter-hegemonic thought and practice. Alan Antliff argues that *anarchism* was the primary ideological force that lent coherence and direction to the American modernism movement between 1908 and 1920.[323] Similar to the Bauhaus project in its early idealist phase before relocation to Dessau, the American modernist sought to bridge the gap between the two epistemologically separated spheres of politics and art. And similarly to the Bauhaus, their overall *political impact*-in terms of a systemic transformation- remained negligible compared with the impact their styles and techniques had on the emergent iconologies of mass persuasion. Furthermore, by directing their art towards revealing a 'society where individual tastes, desires and inclinations'[324] could flourish, they unwittingly helped to *culturally legitimate* the values and norms, or 'ethos' associated with a mass consumption society.[325] They believed fervently in an artistic and cultural project of *individual liberation* in an American society where academy-sanctioned 'high art' remained consumable by a privileged elite; and as such, the central irony is that it was only under conditions of mass reproducibility and mass consumption in which their project could be met.

The anarchist (in distinction to ideologies based on communal politics) underpinning of American modernism is important in this respect, in the sense that early twentieth century anarchism was a 'contested discursive field,' with multiple forms of anarchism competing against each other and 'affecting the self-conscious identity of the artist and recipient.'[326]

[322]Williams, Raymond *Culture and Society, 1780-1950*, London: Penguin Books, 1963, pg. 161.
[323]Antliff, Alan *Anarchist Modernism: Art, Politics, and the First American Avant-Garde*, Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2001, pg. 1
[324] Ibid., paraphrasing Emma Goldman, a key ideologue of the American Modernists
[325] Cooper, John Xiros *Modernism and the Culture of Market Society*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004, pg. 20
[326] Antliff, Alan *Anarchist Modernism: Art, Politics, and the First American Avant-Garde*, Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2001, pg. 2

What they *did* share, was an *opposition* to 'any ensemble of cultural beliefs and practices that oppressed the individual.'[327] In this respect, whilst the modernists were influenced by the ideas of anarchism, their critique was directed against the *cultural beliefs of perceived elites* rather than the system of private property and expropriation itself. An 'ethos' of market society that prioritized individual choice and stylistic freedom would in that case not appear so distant from the goals of the American Modernists. In other words, by separating the cultural values of the Custodian elites from the *processes involved in the transformation* of capitalism to a bureaucratized managerial form that paid closer attention to the habits and aspirations of the mass, the modernists left their own ideas and stylistic innovations vulnerable (like the Bauhaus) to a form of everyday culture captured by mass consumption. So if capitalism in the United States at the end of the 19th century was struggling to culturally legitimize itself through Victorian era Custodian values, the embracing of the rhythms and tempos of modernity by anarchist-modernists provided an 'emergent' culture through which the grammar of hegemony could relocate in the focus of the individual and the *upward social mobility* that a secure Custodian WASP elite seemed to stand against (at a socio-cultural level, if not a political-economic one). I highlight this aspect in terms of the dialectical interplay between emergent and dominant cultures that Williams' suggests holds the key to interrogating the nature of hegemony during a specific period. In the case of the American Modernists, their success in dismantling aspects of the dominance of Custodian elites on the one hand was counteracted to a certain extent by the integration of that *cultural* victory into the agencies and institutions of a newer, transformed and visualized culture of capitalism that would itself become dominant in its cultural form, that is to say, its *aestheticization*.

Artists like Robert Henri, whilst trained in the formal techniques and classical styles of the American art academy system, created an avant-garde through their fusion of revolutionary social and political tendencies with artistic goals. These *artistic* goals were premised, upon a 'new consciousness that would constantly transform every aspect of the self in an unending quest for life's affirmation.'[328] Influenced by Nietzschean prototypes that posited artists, religious visionaries and philosophers at the high end of this quest[329], the 'anarchist-modernists' of the United States had an uneasy and tenuous relationship to the emergent 'masses,' on the one hand portraying the lamentable situations of poverty and alienation with

[327] Ibid., pg. 5
[328] Ibid., pg. 8
[329] Ibid.

startling reality, yet placing the subjects of their concern as a part of a 'herd mentality' that was insufferable to the anarchist focus of the individual.[330] Yet in their conflict with the Custodian norms, the modernists were strategic in the way they brokedown the hold of the institutes, like the National Academy of Design that were perceived to discourage artistic independence with training placing a premium on mastery of Greek, Roman and Renaissance art through *imitation*. The rational process of composition discouraged spontaneity and experimentation, and academy judges tightly controlled the 'space' of the American creative world, holding annual exhibitions presided over selection panels that were composed of artists and teachers that reinforced Custodian approved value and dictated the terms of the public consumption of art.[331] Furthermore, the Custodian establishment rewarded their favoured artists by networking support through newspapers and art journals, making it difficult for artists pursuing alternative visions of culture to transcend this system of cultural patronage.[332]

Robert Henri, having had his work formally rejected by the National Academy of Design in 1907, set up his own exhibition at the MacBeth gallery in New York in 1908 to showcase work of his nonacademic associates; this group would famously become known as 'The Eight,' and counted amongst them Charles Sheeler, who would go on to create the photo-imagization of Henry Ford's River Rouge and Highland Plants.[333] Henri also re-organized the curriculum at the New York School of Art, prioritizing' personality, originality of vision, idea and inventive genius in the search for specific expression stimulated.'[334] And similar to the 'exiles' of the Lost Generation of American literary modernists, Henri encouraged his students to develop their artistic personas in the slums of New York's working class district, finding cultural inspiration amongst the bohemians of Greenwich Village. Typically, this form of cultural practice saw Henri's students walking the line between pursuing artistic goals of individual innovation and expression and producing standardized illustrations in order to make a living. Bessie Marsh, one of Henri's students, received attention from the *New York World* for her painting of two women in the slums recovering from a night out

[330] Ibid.
[331] Ibid., pg. 12
[332] Ibid.
[333] Smith, Terry *Making the Modern: Industry, Art and Design in America,* Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993, pg. 33
[334] Antliff, Alan *Anarchist Modernism: Art, Politics, and the First American Avant-Garde*, Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2001, pg. 15

drinking, yet made her living by selling commercial pastels of 'pretty girls with hats,' to educators and art dealers.[335]

Despite the consistency of compromised activity made by Henri's modernists, the artistic instruction they received that valued 'personality,' 'individualism,' 'virility,' and 'life,' contributed to the breaking down of cultural, gender and class barriers that had previously consigned artists to producing art that was amenable to the National Academy and consumed by upper classes.[336] Furthermore, the vision of artistic freedom gradually found popularity in the press, showcasing the importance of the mediation of emergent aesthetic values in an era of mass reproducibility. I would concur at this point with John Xiros Cooper, who argues that the *prime* concern of artists in *avant*-garde enclaves developing in places like Greenwich Village was the *preservation of art's worth*, and that any counter-hegemonic thought underlying their sometimes explicit anti-capitalist position was motivated by a *reaction* against what they saw as the encroaching commercialization of the art world. Their focus on 'defending the truth and art' from commercialism, their habitation in bohemian enclaves were also motivated by a desire to re-create the 'expiring traditions and values of community,' in a comradely circle organized around the creation of art and enjoyment of intimacy.[337] In terms of the aesthetic conservatism of the avant-garde, the preservation art's worth, its absolute value in the process of completing the finished product through personal strain and sacrifice. The absolutes that structured these judgements were authenticity, necessity and primordiality; ones that supposedly lifted the greatest works beyond the reach of the commodity. But without the benefit of retrospect, nor a holistic theoretical framework to organise practical action, early modernists were bereft to understand the actual nature of capitalism, its transformatory potential for society:

"*...It could transform every affirmation of aesthetic worth, every gesture of aesthetic revolt, indeed take the idea of revolt itself and turn it into a sustaining structure of the new system.*"[338]

As such, I would argue that the two main achievements of the avant-garde in America- firstly, its contribution in challenging and overcoming the cultural hegemony of Custodian, academy-sanctioned art, and secondly in prioritizing and popularizing the ideals of individual

[335] Ibid, pg. 16
[336] Ibid.
[337] Cooper, John Xiros *Modernism and the Culture of Market Society*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004, pg. 26
[338] Ibid., pg 28

self-expression- represent an emergent culture becoming durable and powerful enough *at a particular juncture of political-economic transformation* to surmount the supposed values and norms of the dominant capitalist culture, lending it the dynamism and cultural legitimacy for its agencies of mass persuasion to then re-create visualizations and imagizations of an American capitalism anchored in mass consumption practices that appealed to both the 'residual,' conservative values of the late 19th century *as well as the* modernist values of individual expression. The leitmotifs provided by the latter finally also *realize* the promise of upward social mobility in an *iconology* of capitalism. The particular juncture that makes this possible, as will be argued in Chapter 5, is precisely the conditions of mass reproducibility that allow an emergent culture such as the avant-garde, despite (or because of) its internal antagonisms and contradictions to become durable and aesthetically powerful in a period of political-economic transformation.

4.6 Spaces of Contestation: *Studio 291* and the *Ferrer Center*

Studio 291 was opened in 1908 by American photographer Alfred Stieglitz, and is regarded as having contributed to establishing photography as an artform worthy of a status comparable to painting and sculpture in America.[339] The gallery not only exhibited photography, but was also a site of introduction for European avant-garde artists like Pablo Picasso and Marcel Duchamp, whom Robert Henri had met in Paris and sent their artwork to Stieglitz. Like Henri and Emma Goldman, Stielglitz shared a 'hatred of academic conservatism and the exploitation of artists at the hands of the commercial gallery system.'[340] The Studio 291, which also promoted the photogravure works of the internationally distributed *Camera Work* (in which Emma Goldman published her anarchist writings), as such acted as a site of culturally counter-hegemonic ideas and practices, and along with the Ferrer Center links together a number of important American Modernists including Edward Hopper and Stieglitz's wife Georgia O'Keefe. Their work for Edward Bernays will be elaborated upon in Chapter 5 to demonstrate the intimate personal connections that contributed to the mass persuasion industries. Like Henri's Macbeth Exhibition, the Studio 291 promoted radicalism and individualism, showcasing 'bold experiments of avant-garde artists,' and affirmed the goals of self-fulfillment and artistic freedom in a place where 'one is

[339] Norman, Dorothy *Alfred Stieglitz: an American Seer*, New York: Duell, Sloan & Pierce, 1960, pg. 21
[340] Antliff, Alan *Anarchist Modernism: Art, Politics, and the First American Avant-Garde*, Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2001, pg. 32

free to delight in the freedom of expression in others, thus making it one's own freedom and one's own expression.'[341] It further enmeshed the modernist artists' ideal of a non-national bound artistic community that was also expressed by the Bauhaus.

Likewise, The Ferrer Center, opened in New York in 1911, acted as a training school for modern artists like Edward Hopper and Man Ray, both of whom would become iconic figures of American Modernism, with Hopper's paintings of the lonely figures of New York's nightscape, haunting Art Deco cafés and dramatic use of dark and light acknowledged as a key influence by Hollywood film directors from the 1950s onward. This enduring legacy, taught, created and nurtured in marginal sites of artistic activity that fused anarchist politics, counter-hegemonic artistic practices and reactive ideas against both the perceived commercialization, helped to create an *aesthetic* of American capitalist power, its hegemony anchored in the exchange and dissemination of new styles, techniques and ideas of an emergent, transnational modernist culture, and contested against the norms and values of dominant and residual cultures of corporate capitalism and Custodian genteelness. We can note that the aesthetic styles of modernism, ranging from the Bauhaus to the pioneering photography of Stieglitz attempted to capture and unravel the specific *forms of life and culture that were developing under conditions of modernization*, affirming their products with qualities that were supposed to bring back joy and fulfillment to art from the sterility of academy arts that were suited to 19th century bourgeois culture. Yet in attempting to politicize their art and culture, and seek the 'spirit of unity' in form and design emphasized by the Bauhaus, modernism contributed to the 'mass' forms of capitalist society, ranging from architecture to industrial and commercial products that bore the hallmark of *culturally* counter-hegemonic styles- particular in their rejection of ornamentation and preference for sleek, straight and 'efficient' forms.[342]

In this, I argue that that 'emergent' culture personified by the artists and photographers of sites like Studio 291 and the Ferrer Center also justified the 'aesthetic of efficiency' which had been drawn out of American vernacular forms of art and engineering in the 19th century, which similarly had emerged in contradistinction to the European bourgeois styles and fashions of East Coast elites. As such, the 'residual' and 'emergent' cultures provide

[341] Ibid., pg. 33
[342] Volkmann, Christina and de Cock, Christian 'Consuming the Bauhaus,' in *Consumption, Markets and Culture* (2006, 9:2), pg. 132

hegemony in the early 20th century with a grammar that was drawn from the past (whose culture of efficiency and hard work had worked to fulfill the promises of *Manifest Destiny* and abundance (as imagined in the form of the factory as *cultural artefact*) and the dynamism of the present and the emergent cultures that were no longer submerged by Custodian dominance- a fact made possible by the rise of mass production and mass reproducibility.

Artists such as Charles Sheeler, Man Ray and Edward Hopper were all trained at the Ferrer Center and exhibited their work at Studio 291. Sheeler would also paint and photograph the Ford factories at Highland and River Rouge, contributing to the *iconology* of capitalism. His techniques were influenced by Aleksander Rodchenko, a prominent figure of Soviet Constructivism. This transmission of ideas between modernists from different nations showcases that despite the different ideologies and systems of property of nations, the modernists existed as a *transnational* class of artists and cultural producers who sought to visualise and provide critical commentary on the processes of modernization. Despite their often critical posture against the lowbrow, kitsch products being produced for the mass market, they also contributed to the 'celebration' of modernity, imbuing their art with beauty and virtue. As such these aesthetic developments conferred an appreciation of *modernity* and *modernization* in general, rather than capitalism per se. The aesthetics of hegemony in America, then, showcase a celebration of the artefacts- cultural and industrial- that hoped to *deliver* the promises of abundance and mobility. In a similar vein, Rodchenko's work for *USSR in Construction* helped to legitimate the Stalinist efforts of mass industrialization on a similar terrain: it was not so much a celebration of Communism, but one that highlighted the huge possibilities of industry and the society that might develop out of that in terms of fulfilling people's needs and desires.[343] The difference in the United States, however, was that the malleability of structures of class consciousness meant that the art and culture produced under conditions of mass reproducibility were open to interpretation in a way that was not possible in an authoritarian context in the Soviet Union.[344]

[343] Margolin, Victor, *The Struggle for Utopia: Rodchenko, Lissitzky, Moholy-Nagy*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997, pg. 44
[344] Ibid., pg. 58

4.7 Conclusion

This chapter has aimed at elaborating the key aesthetic contestations in early 20th century American art and culture. The purpose of this is to provide an understanding of the styles and movements that contribute to the aesthetics of hegemony under Sloanist conditions. The importance of these movements, particular in the case of modernism, was that they presented a *political* challenge to received notions of cultural and political-economic order. Using Raymond Williams and Walter Benjamin as a theoretical template for this analysis, it has been shown that the development of an under-appreciated American vernacular art co-existed with 19th century bourgeois categorizations and appreciation of art. Furthermore, the rise of a *transnational* modernism artistic movement, fused with counter-hegemonic ideas and practices, likewise challenged and prevailed over the 'high' art preferences of American elites.

The tensions between vernacular art and culture and bourgeois preferences highlight both the importance and difficulty of drawing out the 'aesthetic of hegemony.' Vernacular art remained unappreciated and overlooked because of expectations that American art would imitate and conform to parameters of artistic judgement that had been created in Western Europe and circulated amongst East Coast elites in America. For an individual to have a refined taste, or sense of style, it was Europe that they would turn to for inspiration. Those tastes and styles represented aesthetic markers of a person's position in society, and in the context of a society evermore conditioned by ideals of upward social mobility, became models of *emulation*.

However, residing through the completion of Manifest Destiny at the turn of the 20th century, an American vernacular art and culture that prized the 'aesthetic of efficiency' and sleek design using simple materials began to make an impact on the styles and designs upon architecture and public works that would become iconic to American power, including the great skyscrapers of New York and the Brooklyn Bridge. At the same time, Europeans reacting against the increasing mechanization of production initiated discourses and practices that were designed to restore the sense of worth to worker production *as well as* create products that fulfilled aesthetic virtue for those who consumed them. Beginning with John Ruskin in Great Britain and culminating in the Bauhaus School in Germany, these ideas had 'anti-modern' impulses *and* counter-hegemonic thoughts behind them. They also gradually

ceded more and more towards mechanization and eventually big business. The key point however, is how those initial impulses of aesthetic fulfillment offered a new template for mass production and mass consumption in terms of design and style.

The reception of modernism in the United States has been often cast aside as a moment where capitalism 'absorbed' counter-hegemonic art and culture. By looking at the spaces of contention such as Studio 291 and the Ferrer Center, this chapter has argued that those artists and cultural producers had a more enduring effect on the 'aesthetics of hegemony.' They provided a new grammar in which ideals of upward social mobility could be captured and furthermore demonstrated the waning of Custodian cultural norms. Focusing on the 'new' and the 'individual,' modernism provided an aesthetic template for the development of Sloanist society, whose power lay precisely in its ability to showcase promises of abundance and mobility in a visual iconology of capitalist power. In this way, it showed surprising concomitance with a similar visualization of collective industrial power in the Soviet Union.

The next chapter will demonstrate how the transformation in artistic practices, alongside the changes in structures of class and class consciousness, coalesced in the mass persuasion industries, the key site that articulated and disseminated the values of the 'aesthetics of hegemony.'

Chapter 5
The Art of Mass Persuasion

5.1 Introduction

The previous chapter established the role of artistic modernism *and* American vernacular in shaping the 'aesthetic' of hegemony under Sloanist conditions in early 20th century. This chapter will critically evaluate in what way that 'aesthetic' was visualized and articulated in key site of dissemination; the mass persuasion of industries of advertising and public relations. These industries demonstrate a particular social interaction between business, government, social theorists and artists, designers, and copywriters. The individuals of these different social groups all lent their interests and values in the co-ordination of strategies of mass persuasion.

Ideas of mass persuasion, as exemplified in the work of Edward Bernays and Walter Lippmann, provide a strong focus on the 'psychological' and 'scientific' bases of new marketing, advertising and public relations strategies. Despite the enduring relevance of these perspectives, it is not the purpose of this chapter to document or discredit the role of the 'depth' approach, behavioural psychology and other tools of social science in the rise and success of the advertising and public relations industries, nor to underestimate how they contributed to the ascent of mass persuasion in the political-economic and socio-cultural arenas. Rather, it focuses on how the *art* of mass persuasion co-existed with these social scientific theories, and provided an *aesthetic* template for them to be realizable in the articulation and visualization of hegemony under Sloanist conditions.

It will be argues that the advertising and public relations industries are not distinct entities, but from the outset were intertwined and produced a range of new techniques- from the use of celebrity endorsements for both politicians and household goods and the pioneering of 'emotional' merchandising to the use of avant-garde and modernist artistic techniques and creation of a mass communicative complex between advertisers, newspapers, magazines and radio. As such, an analysis of the growth of the advertising and PR industries themselves can only go so far, in that whilst it might illuminate their success in creating and sustaining a mass consumption orientated political economy, it does not explain the *power* of the ideas

that underpinned that success, or in what ways it contributed to the re-articulation of *hegemony* by the time of the crucial juncture of the Great Depression.

It will therefore be argued that the *art* of persuasion- aimed at consumers and voters- had become entrenched as a technique of political-economic elites- precisely because, as a technique that drew from the reservoir of cultural discordance in the United States over the nature and reflection of encroaching trends of modernity and modernization, it acted as a 'Janus', able to simultaneously privilege the ideas, norms and values of the previous, 'Custodian' era *as well as* proclaim *selected* 'virtues' of the modern age that were favourable to the requirements of an expanding consumer market. With respect to this process of 'selection,' the role of the *editor* becomes paramount, for both the selection, phrasing and arrangement of copy as well as the placement and stylisation of increasingly prevalent visual aids. Making of use of new medias and continually refining techniques of photogravure newspapers, lifestyle magazines and poster art began to showcase a number of visual accompaniments to copy, from satirical political cartoons and photographs of warfare, to advertisements.

The key social agents that contributed to the *art* of mass persuasion held a number of often discordant and antagonistic ideals about what was happening in the US at the time- from the more obvious figures of Edwards Bernays and Calvin Coolidge, to the 'backstage' characters of the copywriting and illustrations departments of advertising agencies, the 'space-jobbers' of newspapers and lifestyle magazines. Holding haphazard assumptions about people's desires and behaviour on the one hand, and yet a yearning for professionalization, industry acceptance and organizational standardization on the other, the encroachment of the *science* of mass persuasion only becomes definitive *after* the period of creative innovation that characterises advertising and PR between 1919 and 1929. As such, the 'moment' of hegemony, the genesis of a culturally legitimated 'consensus' that successfully articulates the political-economic interests of a specific elite as *general interest* occurs during the integration of artistic and creative techniques that *bypass* the rational subject and appeal to emotional and sentimental faculties of people. In liaison with emergent structures of communication and medias of visualization, I will argue that this represents an *aesthetic* transformation of political economy, whereby the depiction of 'ideals' of material aspiration and personal 'utopias' of individuals (i.e., how people would like to be perceived and how people would like to be in the future) give rise to a political-economic configuration that became

increasingly hinged upon *appearance* (i.e., perception and reflection upon *form*) of ideas, as *content* was gradually stripped away- what Jackson Lears has called the 'collapse of meaning.'

The importance of this approach, and focusing on the social agency that facilitated these transformation, showcases that far from having planned strategies of 'deception,' or 'veiling' in the Bernaysian sense, advertising and PR men often acted impulsively and opportunistically. Rather than social content of advertising art and copy either *reflecting* transforming attitudes of the American public or *engineering* those attitudes, the practices and ideas of advertising people remain ambiguous and selective- sometimes distorting social reality to create 'modern' aspirational models infused with progressive, modernist sensibilities that were at odds with the reluctant modernism of other advertisers. The section regarding the differences in approach, attitude and ideas of three advertising agencies during this period should showcase how both Custodian and Modernist ideals were integrated into an aesthetic of the *American Dream*.

Finally, we must consider the *dialectical* interplay of ideas, practices and images that allows us to move beyond the idea that hegemony operates as a 'top-down' process where the norms and values of ruling classes are 'filtered down' through society. David Gartman argues that the emergence of mass produced automobiles- whether it be Ford's 'everyman' Model T, or the vertically stylised brand ranges of the General Motors Corporation- was as much to do with the pressures of working class and emergent white collar class agencies, that their consciousness of upward social mobility and choices made in the market for automobiles, their responses to questionnaires over chassis design, all represent *political* aspirations and demands made within the seemingly separate domain of culture. Precisely because of an ever-growing recognition of the 'masses' and the 'public,' business leaders looked towards the advertising and PR industries to ascertain more clearly (though often with nonsensical results, as the example of JWT's European market for GM foray will show) what the desires, political, economic or socio-cultural, of the people actually were. Whilst Packard provides a convincing argument that this 'probing of the public mind' through psychoanalytical and social scientific techniques is justified, it is argued here that those techniques, whilst certainly in early fruition during this period, did not become prevalent until the New Deal era, and that for the period between 1919 and 1930, the circulation of ideas and attempts to influence public desire were more influences by artistic and creative techniques.

As such, this final chapter aims to reconcile the claims made in the previous three chapters. Firstly, that a framework of Sloanism provides a fuller picture of hegemony than Fordism. This chapter shows how advertisers and public relations consultants shaped and fostered the ideals of upward social mobility within the agencies of mass persuasion. It will also show how the breakdown of cultural order and rise of counter-hegemonic ideas helped to bring a vocabulary and grammar to the mass persuasion industries that allowed it to portray particular ideal-types of American history, present and future in which Raymond Marchand argues coalesces around the idea of the 'American Dream.' Finally this chapter will demonstrate how the *techniques* and *styles* of both modernism and vernacular American art contributed to the images produced by the advertising industries, and how they figure in the public relations industry. These final claims will be substantiated by a case study of Edward Bernays' public relations work, drawn from the Library of Congress Archives.

5.2 Situating Mass Persuasion

"*The conscious and intelligent manipulation of the organised habits and opinions of the masses is an important element in democratic society. Those who manipulate this unseen mechanism of society constitute an invisible government which is the true ruling power our country*."[345]

"*The use of mass psychoanalysis to guide campaigns of persuasion has become the basis of a multimillion dollar industry. Professional persuaders have seized upon it in their groping for more effective ways to see us their wares- whether products, ideas, attitudes, candidates, goals or states of mind.*"[346]

Edward Bernays, writing in 1928 on the cusp of the Great Depression in *Propaganda*, presents in the most straightforward manner the case for the manipulation of the 'masses' as a *means* through which those occupying the dominant social order can retain and expand their power into all areas of social, political and economic life. In no uncertain terms, Bernays calls upon these people- the true, 'invisible' government of the United States of America- to organise specific strategies of manipulation, to draw a 'veil' over society under the guise of liberal democracy and stand assured behind this veil to particularise the tastes, habits and opinions of the 'masses.'

[345]Bernays, Edward *Propaganda*, New York: Horace Liverlight, 1930, pg.2
[346]Packard, Vance *The Hidden Persuaders*, London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1957, pg.3

For Bernays, this project of deception, of mass persuasion, was a necessity if Americans were to live together in a peaceful and functioning society. Armed with the new social scientific tools provided by psychoanalysis, Bernays was adamant that there were now novel ways of 'reaching into the mass,' believing that 'the understanding of the mental processes and social patterns of the masses facilitates the ability to harness the old social forces and contrive new ways to **bind** and **guide** the world.'[347]

Thirty years later, in the *Hidden Persuaders*, Vance Packard confirmed the professionalization of the public relations industry as a multi-million dollar phenomenon in the United States by the 1950s. Focusing on the 'depth' approach to public relations and advertising, Packard privileges the role of social scientific, psychological and psychiatric techniques that underpinned Motivational Research and Behaviouralism to explain the rise of *Persuasion* in the United States. His analysis brings to the fore dedicated advertising agencies, flanked by phalanxes of psychologists, with rooms dedicated to testing volunteers from the public where 'depth' probing into people's subconsciousnesses could be carried out, analysed and translated into marketing and advertising strategies. These 'depth' men were attempting to understand 'why people do what they do'- in order to more *efficiently and effectively influence* people's behaviour, and direct that behaviour in non-coercive ways towards the mass market of commodities and services.[348]

Despite the enduring relevance of these perspectives, it is not the purpose of this chapter to document or discredit the role of the 'depth' approach, behavioural psychology and other tools of social science in the rise and success of the advertising and public relations industries, nor to underestimate how they contributed to the ascent of mass persuasion in the political-economic and socio-cultural arenas. Rather, focusing on the Gramscian moment of *hegemony*, studies of Edward Bernays' PR work drawn from the Library of Congress Archives, along with analyses of three major advertising agencies in the pre-Great Depression era (N.W. Ayer & Son, J.W. Thompson, and Barton, Durstine & Osborn (BDO)) will be interrogated to argue that these techniques, *together with* the transformation of the socio-cultural content of advertising *art* can allow us to re-imagine the processes of hegemony during the early Fordist period.

[347]Bernays, Edward *Propaganda*, New York: Horace Liverlight, 1930, pg.2
[348]Packard, Vance *The Hidden Persuaders*, London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1957, pg.8

Specifically, it will be argued that, advertising and PR industry are not distinct entities, but from the outset were intertwined and produced a range of new techniques- from the use of celebrity endorsements for both politicians and household goods and the pioneering of 'emotional' merchandising to the use of avant-garde and modernist artistic techniques and creation of a mass communicative complex between advertisers, newspapers, magazines and radio. As such, an analysis of the growth of the advertising and PR industries themselves can only go so far, in that whilst it might illuminate their success in creating and sustaining a mass consumption orientated political economy, it does not explain the *power* of the ideas that underpinned that success, or in what ways it contributed to the re-articulation of *hegemony* by the time of the crucial juncture of the Great Depression.

It will therefore be argued that the *art* of persuasion- aimed at consumers and voters- had become entrenched as a technique of political-economic elites- precisely because, as a technique that drew from the reservoir of cultural discordance in the United States[349] over the nature and reflection of encroaching trends of modernity and modernization, it acted as a 'Janus', able to simultaneously privilege the ideas, norms and values of the previous, 'Custodian' era *as well as* proclaim *selected* 'virtues' of the modern age that were favourable to the requirements of an expanding consumer market. With respect to this process of 'selection,' the role of the *editor* becomes paramount, for both the selection, phrasing and arrangement of copy as well as the placement and stylisation of increasingly prevalent visual aids. Making of use of new medias and continually refining techniques of photo-lithography, newspapers, lifestyle magazines and poster art began to showcase a number of visual accompaniments to copy, from satirical political cartoons and photographs of warfare, to advertisements.[350]

The key social agents that contributed to the *art* of mass persuasion held a number of often discordant and antagonistic ideals about what was happening in the US at the time- from the more obvious figures of Edwards Bernays and Calvin Coolidge, to the 'backstage' characters[351] of the copywriting and illustrations departments of advertising agencies, the

[349]Coben, Stanley *Rebellion Against Victorianism: The Impetus for Cultural Change in 1920s America*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991, pg. 27. Cotkin, George *Reluctant Modernism: American Thought and Culture, 1880-1900*, New York: Twain Publishers, 1992

[350]Ewen, Stuart *All Consuming Images: The Politics of Style in Contemporary Culture*, New York: Basic Books, 1988, pg. 24. Ewen argues that the period between 1910 and 1930 witnessed a transition between consuming 'copy' to consuming 'images,' where explanation and articulation gives way to aura and appearance.

[351]Marchand, Roland *Advertising the American Dream: Making Way for Modernity, 1920-1940*,Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985, pg. 49. Marchand draws a comparison between theatre actors and advertising men, arguing that they both have a 'retreat' in the backstage where their private reflections and personalities- and the ideas they articulated- are shielded away from the public limelight.

'space-jobbers' of newspapers and lifestyle magazines. Holding haphazard assumptions about people's desires and behaviour on the one hand, and yet a yearning for professionalization, industry acceptance and organizational standardization on the other, the encroachment of the *science* of mass persuasion[352] only becomes definitive *after* the period of creative innovation that characterises advertising and PR between 1919 and 1929. As such, the 'moment' of hegemony, the genesis of a culturally legitimated 'consensus' that successfully articulates the political-economic interests of a specific elite as *general interest* occurs during the integration of artistic and creative techniques that *bypass* the rational subject and appeal to emotional and sentimental faculties of people. In liaison with emergent structures of communication and medias of visualization, I will argue that this represents an *aesthetic* transformation of political economy, whereby the depiction of 'ideals' of material aspiration and personal 'utopias' of individuals (i.e., how people would like to be perceived and how people would like to be in the future)[353] give rise to a political-economic configuration that became increasingly hinged upon *appearance* (i.e., perception and reflection upon *form*)[354] of ideas, as *content* was gradually stripped away- what Jackson Lears has called the 'collapse of meaning.'[355]

5.3 Advertising and Public Relations: Social Agency and Mass Persuasion

"To make advertising interesting, we need a sensation; and advertising forms so large a part of our daily intellectual diet, that it seems not too grasping to ask for a change of mental food."[356]

The modern advertising industry in the US has its roots in the period between 1890 and 1930, during which period a number of previously separate tasks, carried out by separate practioners, gradually began to be absorbed by successful advertising agencies such as N.W. Ayer & Son, founded in 1869 in Philadelphia. These tasks included the traditional, 19th century role of the advertising agencies such as buying and selling space in newspapers and printed journals. Other 'primary' functions of what we now understand as advertising, such as the production of written copy, illustrative accompaniments and the processes of

[352] An umbrella term I use here to express the various social scientific and psycho-analytical approaches to advertising and PR that form the underpinning of Packard's, 'Hidden Persuaders,' Jacques Ellul's '*Propaganda*'

[353] Marchand, Roland *Advertising the American Dream: Making Way for Modernity, 1920-1940*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985, pg. 18

[354] Gartman, David 'Why Modern Architecture Emerged in Europe, not America: The New Class and the Aesthetics of Technocracy,' in *Theory, Culture, Society* (2000, 17:75)

[355] Lears, Jackson *Fables of Abundance: A Cultural History of Advertising in America*, Basic Books, 1995, pg. 160

[356] Billings, Elizabeth C. 'A Revolution in Advertising,' *Atlantic Monthly* (v.110, 1912) accessed from *Hathi Trust Digital Library: http://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=mdp.39015030109915*

physically reproducing the advertisement were carried out by separate, normally independent tradesmen.

Thus the *agency* remained a 'middle-man,' whose entry into economic life was necessitated by geographically expanding market areas, with clients requiring sales promotions into 'new' markets across the United States. The *advertiser* in the 19th century would then be sub-contracted by the agency to provide copy, and was assumed to have enough knowledge about local or regional peculiarities, especially regarding localizing sales campaigns in accordance with vernacular language and customs.[357] In tandem with local newspaper editors and publishers, the agency acted as a co-ordinating node between the producer/seller, the advertiser, and the mediums through which advertising would take place.

The transformation of the advertising industry in terms of the gradual centralization of these separate, specialist roles under the guise of a modern corporation cannot be pinpointed to a specific moment, but histories of both N.W. Ayer and J Walter Thompson (JWT) agencies highlight the role of expanding circulation of newspapers, when editors and owners of newspapers sought to increase their income through advertising, as subscriptions alone could no longer pay their enterprise any longer.[358] The history of newspaper and print journalism expansion, indeed, can be considered to be corollary to the transformation of advertising- in fact the very first 'advertising' agency known in the United States, Volney B. Palmer, was founded in 1842 in Philadelphia at the behest of the city's printers who had recently launched newspapers.[359] As newspaper circulation rose throughout the late 19th century, so advertising's role transformed to deal with the technical details of printing and layout, lithographic reproduction and illustration. Nevertheless, advertisers still saw their function primarily in terms of their contribution to one goal- shifting the commodity from producer to consumer:

"*Some of them buy and sell tangible goods; others buy and sell services; but this difference does not affect the value of their work. They win a place in our economic structure through their ability to perform a service more cheaply or more effectively than the non-specialised business man can do it*."[360]

[357] Hower, Ralph Merle *The History of an Advertising Agency: N.W. Ayer & Son at Work, 1869-1949*, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1949, pg. 14
[358] Ibid., pg.16
[359] Tungate, Mark *Adland: A Global History of Advertising,* London: Kogan Page Publishers, 2007, pg. 4
[360] Hower, Ralph Merle *The History of an Advertising Agency: N.W. Ayer & Son at Work, 1869-1949*, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1949, pg. 9

J Walter Thompson published the *Blue Book of Advertising* in 1904, which likewise specifies the role of advertising in terms of 'space-buying,' and articulates the company's policy of buying space in bulk to produce the most efficient outcome for the client:

"A large agency has a special claim upon the consideration of advertising mediums, because of the magnitude of its output. Buying space in large quantities (and as we have shown, we are the largest buyers in certain lines in this country), we naturally expect and properly obtain the best possible treatment for our clients."[361]

As such, until the period after the First World War, advertising's function was considered by their practioners as functional and instrumental. Self-awareness of the *social* role of advertising, its potentialities for transforming people's consciousness in an enduring manner and cultivating styles, fashions and trends of consumption, is something that only appears after 1919; the period of 1900-1919 can therefore be considered to be one of technical innovation, organizational reform and standardization, as well as absorbing influences from developments in social sciences (survey techniques being the most predominant at that stage, under the banner of 'scientific' approaches to advertising and marketing) and the world of art.[362] Accompanying this change is the transformation of the *advertisement* itself, moving from 'mere explanation and description to argument, persuasion and lure.'[363]

Advertising firms such as N.W. Ayer were also involved in forms of PR from the early 20th century. Having secured large corporate clients such as Standard Oil and the National Biscuit Company, Ayer were initially compelled to take account (in their advertising campaigns) the public attitude towards 'big business,' which during the 'muck-raking' era of journalism, had been unfavourable, with the experience of the depression of the 1890s still fresh in the public mind, and further enhanced by journalistic work that ambitiously uncovered widespread corruption by the 'robber barons' as well as municipal politicians. Ayer's leadership (at the time under the founder's son, F. Wayland Ayer) recognised the need to repair relations between their client and the public, with the most common form of this being carefully placed news material, that whilst not denying the malpractices of corporate activity, at least

[361] *The Thompson Method*, accessed from Duke University Libraries Digital Collections, 'Emergence of Advertising in America,' http://library.duke.edu/digitalcollections/eaa.Q0012/pg.2/
[362] Marchand, Roland *Creating the Corporate Soul: The Rise of Public Relations and Corporate Imagery in American Big Business*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998, pg. 112
[363] Ewen, Stuart *All Consuming Images: The Politics of Style in Contemporary Culture*, New York: Basic Books, 1988, pg. 14

portrayed big business as apologetic and attuned to the reformist drives of the Progressive movement:

"The agency strove to obtain public goodwill principally by the use of advertising, but inevitably it was compelled to prepare publicity material as a part of its regular work and also prepare news releases. By 1920 the firm had a well-organized publicity bureau which became increasingly important during the next decade. Its function was not merely to get news material into the papers; sometimes it had to restrain the client's desires in that direction."[364]

Bernays' writings in 1928, however, also incorporate theories of mass psychology, such as those of Trotter and Le Bon, whose studies argued that the 'group mind does not think, but has habits, impulses and emotions.'[365] As such, Bernays' own theory and practice of PR was justified in accordance with these theories, whose 'newness' and 'scientific' nature. Ayer's Public Relations work, on the other hand, gives no indication of the influence of theories of mass psychology until the Cold War period, with PR functions limited to sending news material to journalists and editors. It was not until 1930, as the ramifications of the stock market crash began to be felt as the Great Depression, that Ayer's attitude towards PR 'transformed from impressing the *client among the press*, to assisting clients on *all possible fronts*.'[366]

For Bernays as an individual practioner, the role of PR was the *dominant* form of mass persuasion, with advertising acting as one of many potential auxiliaries in the process of persuasion (this will be made clearer in the section on the case studies of Bernays' work). For N.W. Ayer however, PR appears to function as a subordinate of advertising, whereby strategically placed news material acts as a stepping stone in the wider advertising campaign- a necessary part of the campaign nonetheless, in order to generate the 'goodwill' from the public towards the client or the brand in relation to perceptions of malpractice or corruption. Furthermore, their respective attitudes towards the role of PR differ once again as Bernays' articulates the role of PR specifically in terms of *deception* ('the necessary evil') and broadens the scope of PR to the domain of politics and society, recognising the utility of *propaganda* and PR as a *force for consensualizing and legitimating elite values and positively shaping public attitudes towards their leadership during an era of rapid socio-*

[364]Hower, Ralph Merle *The History of an Advertising Agency: N.W. Ayer & Son at Work, 1869-1949*, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1949, pg. 287.
[365] Ibid.
[366] Ibid., pg 291

economic transformation, whereas N.W.Ayer regarded it no more than one of many functions carried out by the agency, and their perspective on PR remains limited to improving the client's 'saleability.' Nevertheless, Ayer's recognition of the importance of PR is confirmed by the very fact that they had a dedicated publicity bureau in place by 1920.

With this in mind, I would argue that whilst the functions of PR and advertising differ- PR being the 'general management of the client's relationship with the public,' and advertising involving the specific role of art, copy and design techniques- the closeness of the two in terms of their relationship with both clients and the public make them a hybrid conjunction of social agents that facilitated the *art* of mass persuasion. Whilst Bernays' *Propaganda* impressively portrays mass persuasion as a science and tool of manipulation, it is questionable whether the *social* impact he predicted and desired would have been quite so assured without the transformation of creative styles and social content of advertising art that took place on drawing tables of Madison Avenue during the 1910s and 1920s. Likewise, would advertising have become the ubiquitous phenomenon it is today without the public relations agents and their tireless efforts to forge multiple channels of meaningful dissemination through newspapers, radio and film? As an indication of their relevance, marketers spent $100 million on adverts in newspapers and magazines in 1900, with 3,500 different advertisements reaching approximately 65 million people.[367] By 1914, this figure had jumped to $682 million; and on the cusp of the Great Depression in 1929, advertising volumes had reached a staggering $2,987 million.[368]

The final 'node' in piecing together the *art* of mass persuasion, is the role of newspapers and magazines. Until the widespread availability and affordability of household television sets in the United States, advertising budgets remained largely pinned to newspapers and magazines, even despite the growth of radio.[369] Not only was printed journalism important for the placement of advertisements, but editors pioneered some techniques that would later go on to become 'industry standard' within advertising. William Randolph Hearst, 'largely responsible for everything we see in newspapers today,'[370] introduced 'staged' photography

[367] Tungate, Mark *Adland: A Global History of Advertising,* London: Kogan Page Publishers, 2007, pg. 16
[368] Marchand, Roland *Advertising the American Dream: Making Way for Modernity, 1920-1940*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985, pg. 7
[369] Tungate, Mark *Adland: A Global History of Advertising,* London: Kogan Page Publishers, 2007, pg. 34
[370] Procter, Ben *William Randolph Hearst: The Early Years, 1863-1920,* New York: Oxford University Press, 1998, pg. 10

in *The New York Journal* during the Spanish-American War, and in his renowned circulation battle with Joseph Pulitzer's *New York World*, pioneered the use of 'Yellow Journalism.'[371] This editorial 'technique,' summarised by Frank Luther Mott, involved the use of 'scare' headlines, greater space given to pictures and drawings, faked interviews and the use of supposed 'experts,' to provide pseudo-scientific evidence for engineered claims.[372] Both were also instrumental in pioneering the use of colour, particularly for full-colour Sunday supplements. The use of sensationalised headlines in newspapers has its parallel in Albert Lasker's pioneer work in 'sloganeering,' whilst the staged photography used to elicit sympathy for the plight of the Cubans during the war is a predecessor for the rise of 'emotional merchandising,' during the 1920s, in the way the sale of the 'idea' (in this case, to garner support for the US government in going to war with Spain) was hinged upon creating emotional and sentimental 'hooks' to engage the consumer with the personal feelings of shame.

Another figure of importance in this respect was Henry Luce. Whilst not associated directly with the advertising or PR industries, as founder of the Time-Life media empire, Luce was instrumental in the spread of targeted magazines such as *Time* (1923) and *Fortune* (1930). Luce pioneered the 'terse, personality-based, attitudinal 'new journalism,' as well as 'investigative, analytical and highly literate articles that examined business society.'[373] Luce's magazines pioneered photojournalism in the United States that drew from the avant-garde and constructivist photography of Soviet artist Alexander Rodchenko. Both Luce's *Fortune* and Rodchenko's *USSR in Construction* were launched in 1930. For now what is important is to concretize the agency that underpinned the *art of* mass persuasion- the advertising industry, Public Relations practioners, newspaper and magazine editors are all considered here to be a part of the same complex of *mass communications* whose techniques, ideas and styles were instrumental in the ascent of mass persuasion and the emergent *iconology* of the American Dream.

5.4 The Transformation of Advertising: Values, Form and Content.

For the purposes of this chapter, the transformation of the social content of advertising art will be considered as an aesthetic development that mediated a complicated set of class and

[371] Campbell, W. Joseph *Yellow Journalism: Puncturing the Myths, Defining the Legacies*, Praeger, 2001, pg. 7
[372] Ibid., pg. 15
[373] Brinkley, Alan *The Publisher: Henry Luce and his American Century*, Knopf Doubleday, 2010, pg. 11

class consciousness problems in the United States between 1900 and 1930. The 'complicated' set of problems here refers to the way in which *class* as traditionally understood is related to transforming ideals and values of *class consciousness*. Roland Marchand's study *Advertising the American Dream* argues that by 1940, advertising had successfully developed to the point where it became the *primary* source of the social reproduction, expansion entrenchment of mass consumption society in the United States.[374] Furthermore, the *social power* of advertising lay in its unique ability to conceal or circumvent the lived, material socio-economic contradictions in US society at the time, particularly the widening gap between wealthy elite groups and a number of marginalised social groups. The 'American Dream' here is to be understood as an aesthetic of *upwardly mobile materialist aspiration*, where values of individual socio-economic mobility, hard work and wealth are prized over other existent values such as socio-economic equality and social justice. The power of frequently repeated images and ideas helped to 'establish broad frames of reference, define the boundaries of public discussion and determine relevant factors in a situation.'[375] Furthermore, it engendered an idea of *what it meant to be an American citizen*, during a dramatic period of social and economic transformation.[376] Advertisements contributed to the shaping of a 'community of discourse,'[377] where the highly visible and penetrative features (most notably in radio, broadcast into the family home) and continuous repetition through all forms of emergent popular media meant that the creative slogans and images of advertising found their way into the 'common' or 'public' discourse of the US. We may even broaden out this suggestion that whilst it played a significant role in establishing frames of reference, perception and discourse, contributes significantly to the *re-ification* of capitalist political-economic and social relations, which become all the more important in a society of perpetual change. It is argued here therefore that the social power derived from advertising was powerful enough to remain in place as a hegemonic ideal during the Great Depression and New Deal reconstruction eras, and as such its development and sophistication *before* the onset of the era of economic crisis is of paramount importance.

[374]Marchand, Roland *Advertising the American Dream: Making Way for Modernity, 1920-1940*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985, pg.5
[375] Ibid., pg. 53
[376] McGovern, Charles *Sold American: Consumption and Citizenship, 1890-1945*, The University of North Carolina Press, 2006, pg. 37
[377] Marchand, Roland *Advertising the American Dream: Making Way for Modernity, 1920-1940*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985, pg. 24

In the thirty year process of facilitating and engendering a mass consumption society, advertising art's most notable achievement was its ability to portray *workers* and their families as consumers. Terry Smith argues that the Fordist paradigm that rested on labour-wage accommodation and surveillance of workers in attempts to achieve workplace docility could not alone produce the socio-economic upheaval that is characterised by neo-Gramscian IPE. Rather, the problem of social *control* (in a Gramscian sense) could only be resolved if the workers started to *think* like the middle classes, to adopt their consciousness, their desires, tastes and consumption habits and internally normalise the socio-cultural and political-economic norms of the bourgeois.[378] For Smith and Gartman, the 'docility' or acquiescence of all non-hegemonic social groups (i.e., not just blue collar factory workers) to the values of a re-invigorated capitalist ethic based on mass production should be theoretically grounded in *aesthetics*, which, as I explained above, can more fully realise how the *contradictory* and *antagonistic* values of different social groups were synthesized into an apparent 'totality':

"*The true move to modernity, then was the move to consumerism. The true site was not the factory but the* ***creation and circulation of market imagery***."[379]

Social control and the moment of 'hegemony' in Fordism is a Political-Economic power that flows not just from the brutality of the workplace, its 'projections of inevitability', total control, ideals of reason and rationality and the 'model leader,' but more fundamentally "*from its own contradictions, its constantly self-revolutionalizing reinvention of constraints*."[380] This ability to continually 'self-revolutionize' *constraints* is at the same time the ability to open up new social *potentialities*. Walter Benjamin alludes to this in 'The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction,' whereby despite the collapse of authenticity of art (the loss of 'aura,'), its mass reproducibility and availability for the 'masses,' transforms the *aesthetic* of art, in the sense that whereas authentic art and culture was understood by its bourgeois or elite consumers via cultural parameters regarding questions of beauty and sublimity, reproducible art and its new 'consumers' shadows the future of a world where people *understand* that culture and art are no longer the preserve of the elite, that culture and art are no longer the hegemonic artefacts of ruling classes, but can now be subjected to complete re-interpretation amongst those who are dominated.[381]

[378]Smith, Terry *Making the Modern: Industry, Art and Design in America,* Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993, pg. 52
[379] Ibid.
[380] Ibid, pg. 55
[381] Benjamin, Walter *Illuminations*, London: Pimlico, 1999, pg. 222

'Culturally Conservative' Marxists such as Adorno and Daniel Bell have generally disregarded this aspect, bemoaning the mass culture industry as an arena for the circulation of kitsch cultural products that reflect the atomisation and distraction of a populace who become increasingly unable to transform their society (or even think about the *idea* of transforming their society) because of the deepening of the cultural and leisure/entertainments industries. From a Benjaminian perspective, one that is taken up by Smith and Gartman, the transformation of advertising art may be understood as elite attempts to manipulate and engineer consensus amongst the dominated (articulating special interests as general interests), but from a Benjaminian perspective, we can understand this same process as one where the working classes are increasingly *aware* of their capabilities in society, their access to art and culture and their ability to realise their own aspirations and values through those domains, rather than in the traditional political domain.[382] In other words, people are not drawn to the world of mass culture and mass consumption because they are passive dupes, or atomised robots who require an analgesic because of the twin affects of alienated labour (under machine dominated Fordist practices) and the totality of administered, instrumentalized capital, but rather participate in these new, everyday, activities, as *political* interventions, realizing their aspirations and values through consumptive practices and lifestyle choices that were in any case unavailable to them previously.

The most telling and enduring transformation of the social content of advertising was the passage from descriptive and 'reason-why' advertising towards the subtle, suggestive qualities of emotion-based advertising. There are no clear distinguishing points during this passage, as some advertisers continued to use explanatory copy for some products. However, advertising historians like Marchand agree that the space in the advert dedicated to copy gradually became less and less, with a higher degree of value being put upon the illustrative content, that by 1930 had begun to be dominated by combinations of photography and refined artwork influenced by avant-garde movements such as Surrealism. Nevertheless, advertisers had to pay attention to the values and demands of the manufacturers/sellers. The case of N.W.Ayer's relationship with Steinway Piano's illustrates this.

[382]Wolin, Richard *Walter Benjamin: An Aesthetic of Redemption*, Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1994, pg., 81 See also Darrow Schecter, *A History of the Left From Marx to the Present*, chap. 3 'The Frankfurt School and Critical Theory.'

5.5 N.W.Ayer & Son

After the First World War, the piano manufacturing industry began to suffer as 'family pride in the parlour piano began to give way to pride in the car.'[383]Further inroads were made by increasingly affordable home Radios, which offered a broader entertainment spectacle, instead of only music. Steinway enlisted Ayer in part because of Ayer's highly 'traditional' image (as opposed to rival such as Lord & Thomas, owned by Albert Lasker). Steinway refused to compromise the *prestige* of their product by the commonly perceived notion that only high-pressure advertising or 'cheapening' the product for mass accessibility (pioneered by Lasker's Sloganeering revolution between 1910 and 1920). Ayer's solution to this was to convince famous classical musicians to support Steinway's by posing for photographs that would be placed centrally in the advertisement:

> *"NW Ayer & Son soon showed these measures were not necessary to success. It provided a series of rotogravure advertisements in metropolitan newspapers, emphasizing the importance of musical training in the* ***education of children****...and in carefully chosen magazines, the agency also placed a now-famous series of advertisements in color, featuring portraits of famous musicians, scenes from well-known operas, and graphic interpretations of distinguished compositions." The results of this campaign was a success for Steinway; "by 1929, although the piano industry as a whole had dropped below its 1921 capacity, Steinway sales were 69 percent above those of 1921"*[384]

Here we can see that the techniques of persuasion require more than the artistic content of the advertisement itself. Not only do Ayer carefully interpret the values of the Steadway Piano firm- values orientated towards the cultivation of music sensibilities as a part of a broader 'good' education- but they also mobilise three emergent techniques; i) the use of the latest, avant-garde techniques of rotogravure photography in order to position the product in the 'modern' and ii) the stylish placement of music celebrity and popularity (akin to the Bernays method) and iii) the dissemination of these in newspapers and magazines, using PR methods of influencing key media to place the company and its product in good stead with the public. All of this is carried out with one eye looking to the past, re-creating the Custodian appeal of personal self-improvement through classical education and training in a modern, competitive mass market.

[383]Hower, Ralph Merle *The History of an Advertising Agency: N.W. Ayer & Son at Work, 1869-1949*, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1949, pg. 244
[384] Ibid., pg. 291

This example also showcase that as an agency, their particular rooting in 'Custodian' attitudes- as well as clients that gravitated towards Custodian ideals- did their utmost to avoid the kind of sensationalised appeals that were the hallmark of other agencies, particularly JWT, Lord & Thomas and BDO. Instead, their approach in the 1920s was conditioned by concerns for 'cultivating' attitudes of good taste and education whenever the opportunity presented itself. Hower's study reveals that Ayer saw their own position on advertising techniques as morally unassailable; as another example of their work, this time with Hills Brothers, a coffee manufacturer who pioneered the vacuum packed sealed tins, Hower notes that:

"*...the Ayer advertisements made no attempt to attribute any human ills or discomforts to the use of stale coffee. Nor did they try to insinuate that coffee possessed mysterious aphrodisiac properties.*"[385]

It should be also noted that the advertising agency still undertook work that was more akin to the original function of the agency; buying 'space' and organising the distribution of adverts. Their work with Ford Motor Company was much like this, given Ford's personal preference to retain the function of illustration/graphic design and copywriting within the Ford advertising department. The Ayer agency office in Philadelphia contained a Media department and a Printing Department that dealt with the actual setting of type, the printing off of the finished form in varying sizes from 'tabloid sheets to standard eight-page columns.' 'Meanwhile other members of staff had prepared a list of over nineteen hundred newspapers in the United States and Canada in which the advertisement was to appear.[386]

Overall, we can use the history of N.W. Ayer to summarise the following transformations in advertising and its social content:

- The agency began to provide specialist copywriting, 'a growing recognition of the profits to be derived from effectively prepared advertisements.'
- The beginning of recognising the 'profession' of advertising through prize-giving and incentives for outside copywriters.
- Move from 'announcement' style advertising to innovative copy and stylish presentation.
- Increasing depiction of human beings in advertisements, especially children

[385] Ibid., pg 293
[386] Ibid., pg. 310

- Development of photo-electric processes of engraving
- Copy text reduced, made larger and well-spaced without crowding.
- Beginning to emphasise the trademark of the client as recognisable brand.
- Use of layout and display that drew attention to the ad; early entry of modernist art techniques.
- Idea of arousing and stimulating a general interest in product as well specificity of the brand.
- Colour makes its entry in 1893 in American periodical *Youth's Companion*. Despite the increasing use of chromolithography, not until 1910 that the mechanical and financial costs came down; colour helped to create an 'atmosphere of richness and splendour which was particularly useful in advertising luxury products.

After 1906, even larger spaces were being used for advertising; full-page ads started to become common, marking a decisive 'entry' point for advertising styles and themes becoming a part of the 'fabric' of everyday life:

- Copywriters were beginning to achieve a 'unity of text and decoration'; this came of closer agential co-ordination of activity between illustrators and copywriters. 'ARTWORK' not any longer the production of a picture, but 'having a specific job in communicating an idea.' We can hope to prove or argue that the *idea* was one of capitalist consumption norms. Copywriters were trying to persuade, but not consciously to reproduce the domination of capitalist thought- driven as much by attempts to standardise and professionalise, to achieve stylistic satisfaction in their own work. The consideration of technological and artistic techniques must therefore made *central* to the operationalization of hegemony as capitalism undergoes a social, cultural and aesthetic transformation.
- Big business begins to use advertising agencies; in response to the muck-raking era, the companies looked for means of developing a more favourable attitude towards their enterprises. In addition to writing copy that appeal to human buying motives (both rational and emotional) in order to induce desire, illustrative developments showcased techniques that 'could be designed to relate a product to familiar or easily grasped concepts so as to give it, by association, an **intangible but appreciated value, such as luxury, beauty, or success.'** Demonstration that the values of

aspirational materialism were hinged upon these ideas as timeless- capitalism driven by emulation and aspiration towards these things.

- Ayer appoint art director in 1910 responsible for all design and illustrations; but whilst 'genuine art' had made its way into European advertising posters before 1900 (Jules Cheret and Toulouse-Latrec), American advertising art remained amateurish due to the difficulty of finding competent artists willing to accept advertising commissions as well as the problems of reproducing satisfactory quality illustrations in colour.

"*by 1915, however, the business world was beginning to appreciate the commercial value of beauty. A number of influences contributed to this change. The artistic taste of the entire nation had been improving. Sincere and able artists were finding a real challenge in commercial work and were learning how to adapt their skill to the purposes of advertising*."[387]

Again, Hower reflects that ideas of beauty and artistic taste were comprehendible as externalised qualities- appreciation and cultivation of tastes of 'high art', now reproducible through advertising copy and illustration. The key difference with N.W.Ayer was its willingness to mobilise new, modern techniques in art whilst imbuing this with Custodian sensibilities. This was not lost on Ayer's rivals, whose initial foray into sloganeering and 'cheapening' began to lose its appeal to more sophisticated techniques that had to appeal to the perceived sense of longing for a recently transformed past, one in which Custodian domination of culture (from art to ideals of education) appeared secure. Whilst 'Custodian mindsets' continued into the 1920s, they were forced to contend with the new 'Apostles' of modernity in Madison Avenue whose lifestyles were closer to the trends of modernism. The transformation of advertising art as such reflects this antagonism, which found its expression in the enduring *iconology* of advertising artwork, an aesthetic that was able to accentuate the perceived positive cultural qualities of both worlds whilst simultaneously embedding materialist aesthetic of consumption, that showcased people's desires and a *life that they ought to aspire toward*.

"The best advertising art is slightly ahead of the average person's taste, just as the best style in clothing is a little in advance of what the masses are wearing."[388]

[387] Ibid., pg. 315
[388] Ibid., pg. 315

Therefore by 1930, advertising can be said to have portrayed products from toothpastes to political candidates *as being able to satisfy private longings*.

5.6 J.W. Thompson and General Motors: Sloanism

One of the key rivals of Ayer was the advertising firm JWT. Led by the charismatic Stanley Resor, regarded as the pioneer of 'luxury' advertising, fashioning campaigns and brand names after the 'lifestyles' of the well to do, he was a founder member of the American Association of Advertising Agencies, and in 1927 moved into the modern Art Deco skyscraper known as the Graybar building. More in tune with the 'Apostle of Modernity' of Marchand's analysis than the Custodian, traditional outlook of Ayer, Resor's wife Helen Landsdowne was regarded as the greatest copywriter of her generation and is credited with the introduction of 'sex appeal,' following the successful Woodbury facial soap campaign *THE SKIN YOU LOVE TO TOUCH*.[389]

The case of JWT's work for GM is instructive as in the way that Ayer's relationship with Henry Ford reflected the Custodians coming to terms with modernity, JWT and Alfred Sloan appear to be 'modernists' who came to terms with the residual Custodian traits. Furthermore, as Sloan introduced the idea of product brand differentiation and planned obsolescence, his strategies (from the perspective of Smith and Gartman) can be seen to more definitively encompass the *art* of mass persuasion more so than Fordism. JWT's work for GM also encompasses their attempts to enter the *international* markets, holding branch offices in 34 countries around the world.[390]

"*It is a part of our policy to fit our activities into the life of the countries wherein we operate. It is a human courtesy. It is diplomacy. It is also mighty sound business.*" (James D. Mooney, President of GM Export Company)[391]

Mooney and Resor shared similar attitudes to international expansion, and Mooney in particular espoused an almost missionary, imperialist attitude towards the spread of GM abroad, believing that 'American business in export trade,' to the 'the most powerful constructive force in a world which is steadily rebuilding.'[392] Tellingly, he 'dreamed of a

[389] Tungate, Mark *Adland: A Global History of Advertising,* London: Kogan Page Publishers, 2007, pg. 140
[390] Jeff Meron, 'Putting Foreign Consumers on the Map: J. Walter Thompson's Struggle with General Motors' International Advertising Account in the 1920s,' *The Business History Review*. Vol. 73, no. 3, pg. 466
[391] Ibid.,
[392] Ibid, pg. 472

great American commercial Empire,' something that appealed to the mindset of Resor- not particularly because he was an American imperialist, but because it excited his enthusiasm for new projects and new challenges regarding advertising. Whilst the availability of 'American autos in foreign countries gave backward peoples the opportunity to transcend 'their old-time lethargies and traditional inertias,' Resor was advised by his Sam Meek (hired to run JWT's London office) that local customs and practices were respected. Along with GM, between 1925 and 1930 these attitudes had helped JWT to capture the overseas accounts of major brands such as Unilever, Pond's, Kraft, Kodak and Rowntrees.

JWT's hiring of John B. Watson, the founder of the psychological school of behaviouralism, has been credited by Vance Packard with helping JWT becoming the pioneers of 'scientific advertising.' Watson, who was handpicked from John Hopkins University by Stanley Resor, promoted the idea of 'demographics,' for marketing research, advising Resor that different classes behave differently and so that an overall advertising campaign should be compartmentalised to appeal to potential consumers from all backgrounds.

"Watson promoted the use of demographics in advertising, and the General Motors multi-tiered product line seemed perfectly suited to the strategy. A hallmark of JWT's approach to GM advertising followed the automaker's practice of breaking down the markets by income group-lower incomes formed the market for Chevrolet, middle incomes for Buick and Oldsmobile, higher incomes for Cadillac. Watson also advocated Sloanism," named after Alfred Sloan, a GM executive who promoted GM's new policy (in the late 1920s) of yearly model changes. This meshed well with GM's general strategy, as pithily articulated by their research director in the mid-1930s: "The whole object of research is to keep everyone reasonably dissatisfied with what he has in order to keep the factory busy in making new things."[393]

He we have the core of the Sloanist political-economy; a system of perpetual consumer needs created through advertising and marketing to feed new styles and brands for corporations to research and produce. Nevertheless, whilst Watson's influence extends beyond the GM case, the role of his 'scientific advertising' strategies has come into question during this particular period. He was certainly paraded to give speeches at conventions and conferences to clients and during a period when:

[393] Ibid., pg. 475

"*the Thompson agency and the advertising community more generally, sought stature in the business community increasingly caught up in the zeitgeist of 'efficiency,' 'science,' and 'control,' Watson became a symbol of competence, a popularized reification of 'Science,*'"[394]

Kreshel acknowledges that whilst Watson's 'scientific' approach to demographics and advertising were applied in certain cases, there are some doubts to how much science was actually practiced- indicating that the scientific technique was espoused at a superficial level perhaps to gain leverage in the context of an intra-advertising agency debate taking place at the time over the professionalization of their industry. Kreshel also shows that whilst Watson espoused science, in his talks he 'also promoted the move from the rational to the emotional appeal and the use of testimonials to induce strong emotions.'[395] The 'emotional' merchandising strategies had already been in place for a number of years before Watson joined, and it is likely that his enduring legacy (in liaison with other developments such as those survey techniques developed by George Gallup) only became industry standard at a later date. Not only do the highlight the general incompatibility of attempts to use scientific techniques in advertising, which depends on probing the emotional and sentimental reasons behind people's ideals and values, but the very word 'Science' was used to justify and legitimate practices that were actually uncoordinated, opportunistic and dominated by pre-given ideas about people's behaviour- in this way Watson is not so different from the father of 'engineering of consent,' Edward Bernays. Moreover the role of science represents an intervention in the protracted 'moment' of hegemony, where ideals and values of the scientific community- and the perception that these values are dominant over those in the creative and artistic world- are mobilised in a superficial level to legitimate strategies of mass persuasion.

Notwithstanding this criticism, Watson's promotion of demographics at a surface level at least slotted in with GM's product differentiation strategy. As a vertically integrated company that produced its own parts and accessories, (that other car manufacturers would usually purchase from smaller companies, similar to the Microsoft versus Apple approach of the contemporary period), there was already more scope for internal product differentiation, that would eventually characterise GM's overpowering of Ford's market share between 1923 and 1927. The key brands were:

[394] Peggy Kreshel, 'John B. Watson at J. Walter Thompson: The Legimitation of 'Science,' in Advertising,' *Journal of Advertising* 19:2 (1990), pg. 51
[395] Ibid.

1. Chevrolet: "for the Hoi Polloi" (41% of GM sales, 1926)
2. Pontiac: "for the poor but proud"
3. Oldsmobile: "for the comfortable but discreet" (Pontiac and Oldsmobile, 29%)
4. Buick: "for the striving" (25%)
5. Cadillac: "for the Rich" (5%)[396]

The Sloanist strategy of having different priced lines was 'used to exploit consumers' *social and material aspirations* to their fullest.'[397] The differentiation, through product stylisation and planned obsolescence, encouraged consumers to trade up, over time, from Chevrolet through to Cadillac; it therefore also stimulated sales during times of slack, as GM encouraged brand loyalty, allowing consumers to trade their car for a newer and higher-priced one before car's useful life was over; durability, therefore, a prized social value of the Custodian mentality, started to be replaced in the domain of production with the values associated with upward mobility, with the symbols of that ascent being 'easier' to derive through the process of consumption (as opposed to its realization through education or cultivated appreciation for the high arts).

Again, it is difficult to ascertain the full impact of the scientific approach to marketing and advertising. Whilst the research director proclaimed "The whole object of research is to keep everyone reasonably dissatisfied with what he has in order to keep the factory busy in making new things."[398] In PR and advertising, behaviouralism stressed an expansion in market research and social observation to facilitate advertising campaigns and market feasibility; the use of 'emotional' appeals was also pioneered with the widespread introduction of testimonials. However, Meron argues that Watson did very little in reality to actually *practice* the science of behaviouralism; instead it was the 'aura' of science that he brought in terms of the sense of professional method it brought to the industry, as such making the *real* practices of advertising and marketing irrefutable under the general umbrella of social science (and later psychoanalysis).[399] Though there is an element of deception in this process (having similarities with the patent medicine scandals), it was not a *conscious* one; rather, the issue of science and attempts to explain human behaviour according to universal principles stems

[396] Merron, Jeff 'Putting Foreign Consumers on the Map: J. Walter Thompson's Struggle With General Motors' International Advertising Account in the 1920s' *The Business History Review* (1999, 73:3), pg. 472
[397] Ibid, pg. 476
[398] Ibid, pg. 478
[399] Ibid., pg. 480

from *discourse* of science attaining some kind of hegemonic value amongst elite classes during the latter part of the 19th century.[400]

The JWT experience in during the European roll-out of GM illustrates this issue. The picture is one of complete chaos; researchers and office managers struggling to get a grip on local cultures; and meeting bemused responses from survey participants for whom the very idea of survey was alien. Coming up against local resistance and mistrust, the researchers themselves used 'casual' methods for their findings- including running out of the building and 'shouting questions' at pedestrians, in a last-minute attempt to finish up research. The impression is one of a heavy focus on the qualities of scientific research backed up by haphazard and intuitive 'methodology' to fit in with the goal of presenting substantiated and approved data. Meron also makes the point that the idea of conducting *quick* research to impress the client was more important than actually carrying through more identifiably social scientific research. [401]
JWT's GM research used a uniform questionnaire that was translated into different languages in Europe, and then later rolled out to Argentina and Uruguay in 1929. Reports derived from this research was primarily descriptive statistics, covering topics such as the reason why people bought GM cars, their doubts about GM cars, the factors they considered before buying, who drove the car and when, colour preferences and interest in auto mechanics. There was no usage of the techniques that would later become central to the PR/Advertising industry; psychometrics, focus groups, or attempts to get at the unconscious desires of consumers. The reports categorized their selected audiences by occupation and class, but little else to give copywriters a feeling for a mass audience.[402] Crucially by 1929, JWT researchers presumed that unconscious motivations played a role in people's consumer preferences despite the inability to actually ascertain such knowledge.

Despite the voluminous research on different country export markets, ostensibly conducted to ensure culturally attentive and sensitive approaches to the ensuing advertising campaign along national lines, the research produced supported the idea that automobile consumption practices concurred with the US model that offered different product lines based on class and

[400]Coben, Stanley *Rebellion Against Victorianism: The Impetus for Cultural Change in 1920s America*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991, pg. 32-34
[401] Kreshel, Peggy J. 'John B. Watson at J. Walter Thompson: The Legitimation of "Science" in Advertising' *The Journal of Advertising* (1989, 19:2), pg. 58
[402] Merron, Jeff 'Putting Foreign Consumers on the Map: J. Walter Thompson's Struggle With General Motors' International Advertising Account in the 1920s' *The Business History Review* (1999, 73:3), pg. 484

class perception. The research, however, did open up new consciousness about international media, foreign business practices and non-US consumers, which became a hallmark of export advertising thereafter. All this was achieved in little over two years, between 1927 and 1929.

Newspaper advertising remained the primary media through which JWT operated, in all their foreign offices. However, this period apparently witnesses a surge of differentiated publications, and

"with so many media options and so many different car lines, one of JWT's main challenges would be to make things simpler. JWT would strive to give each car a distinctive appeal both in copy, type, layout and art. So distinctive will these campaigns become that it may be possible to remove the name of the car and still recognize it as that car's advertising."[403]

It seems that whilst JWT advertising did use distinctions between international cultures and mobilised demographics derived from surveys in designing its international GM campaigns, the more sophisticated theories such as Watson's behaviourism had little impact on ad content, and no evidence that JWT men applied these theories during the actual composition of the ad. In general, it seems that automobile advertising remained behind the generic psychological manipulation prevalent in 'fear appeal' advertising for toothpastes and deodorants.

General features of the advertisements include illustrations that appear more prominent than copy and automobiles set by passengers or passers-by. According to the 'social tableaux' of advertising theory by Marchand, the content of a social tableau ad depended on the merchandising strategy for that product, shaped by pictorial conventions and the desire to provide the consumer with a scene into which they could comfortably and pleasurably place themselves. However the assumptions of advertisers were reinforced by popular culture (and not derived from research)- people preferred to identify with portrayals of themselves as they aspired to be, rather than as they 'really were'; and therefore, the aesthetic of the social tableau must necessarily aim at depictions of circumstance and setting that are a 'step-up' from the lived circumstance of the reader/recipient.[404] The social tableaux from GM's American ads tended to emphasise the family unit, whereas in Mid. Eastern countries like Egypt, the tableaux were adapted to the cultural parameters of the place (e.g., women were

[403]Marchand, Roland *Advertising the American Dream: Making Way for Modernity, 1920-1940*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985., pg. 485
[404] Marchand, pg. 146

not expected to drive, neither was it acceptable to aspire to drive, in contrast to ads placed in women's magazines in the US which targeted the educated, independent woman).

Despite the resources and time dedicated to conducting market research in international markets on the premise of locating cultural difference and awareness of national media subtleties, Meron argues that by 1929, the New York-based international department had settled on the use of 'pattern' copy and illustrations that could be adapted by local creatives in any country. The more immediate and functional reasons for the ascendance of pattern copy included cost-saving measures, where a standardized portfolio would cut down the expense spent on creative work individual offices would have to carry out; international offices would therefore have more time and money available to spend on 'financially rewarding labors' like gaining new clientele. On a 'philosophical' level, this standardization would facilitate a powerful international image for GM.[405]

This international image was one premised on the transnationalization of the Chevy as GM's symbol. Despite being the 'low-income' bracket model in the US, advertisements for the Chevy from India to Buenos Aires stressed that the car as 'accepted' by prominent, wealthy and classy individuals; a sense of global belonging through style and exclusivity that transcended the national cultural differences that JWT initially tried to uncover. Despite an acknowledgement that there were indeed cultural differences, the research staff of JWT also premeditated the idea that the differences between the elites- those that were targeted by the advertisements- were not so great that they could not integrate an assumed image of wealth and style that spoke across these national cultural differences. In a society where 'class' appears to have played no definitive or prominent role in the party political organisation and mainstream governmental system, the assumptions of class status, preferences and consciousness rears its power at an aesthetic level.

Whereas GM's American ads often looked for portrayals of the nuclear family (before the idea existed), the depiction of the upper class corresponded closely with the generic depictions of foreign ads; women depictions based around the 'Fisher Body girl' of young, slim and urbane; men dressed in suit-tie combination or fashionable sporting outfit. As such, we may argue that either those responsible for copy and illustration in foreign ads already

[405] Merron, Jeff 'Putting Foreign Consumers on the Map: J. Walter Thompson's Struggle With General Motors' International Advertising Account in the 1920s' *The Business History Review* (1999, 73:3), pg. 485

assumed that there was a general concomitance in style and values of a 'transnational' upper-class, set apart by subtle national differences but ultimately converging around socio-cultural norms regarding leisure time and fashion. Did they discern this from observations of upper-class activity in foreign countries, or was it simply repetitive 'patterning' of copy that implicated particular fashions and styles in their depictions. Furthermore, if these styles were *not* similar to those depicted in the ads, did these depictions encounter resistance or in fact are we looking at the genesis of 'Americanization'- aspirational 'good-life' adventures of the upper class creeping other cultures through advertising's social tableaux? The following illustrations, taken from the Duke University Libraries Digital Collections Archive "Emergence of Advertising in America, 1850-1920," should showcase the *transnationalization of an aesthetic of aspiration*.

5.7 “The Motor Car is the Magic Carpet of Modern Times”

Figure 1

The intention of the social tableau in this advert is blatant and clear; ‘Lexington motor cars are sold in every *civilised* country on the globe’. Where better to start than the *Thorobred* Anglo-American relationship? Despite the claim that their cars are sold in every civilized country, Lexington ensures that the recipient remembers that ‘primitivism’ in the form of the horse-drag used by ‘American Indians’ co-exists within the heartland. The peaceful setting of the tableau, generating an aesthetic of civility and calm in what is supposedly England, would be immediately recognisable to the emergent middle-classes who had begun to move away

from the centre of big cities like New York, towards the suburban areas that were characteristic of the lifestyle of 'conspicuous consumption.'

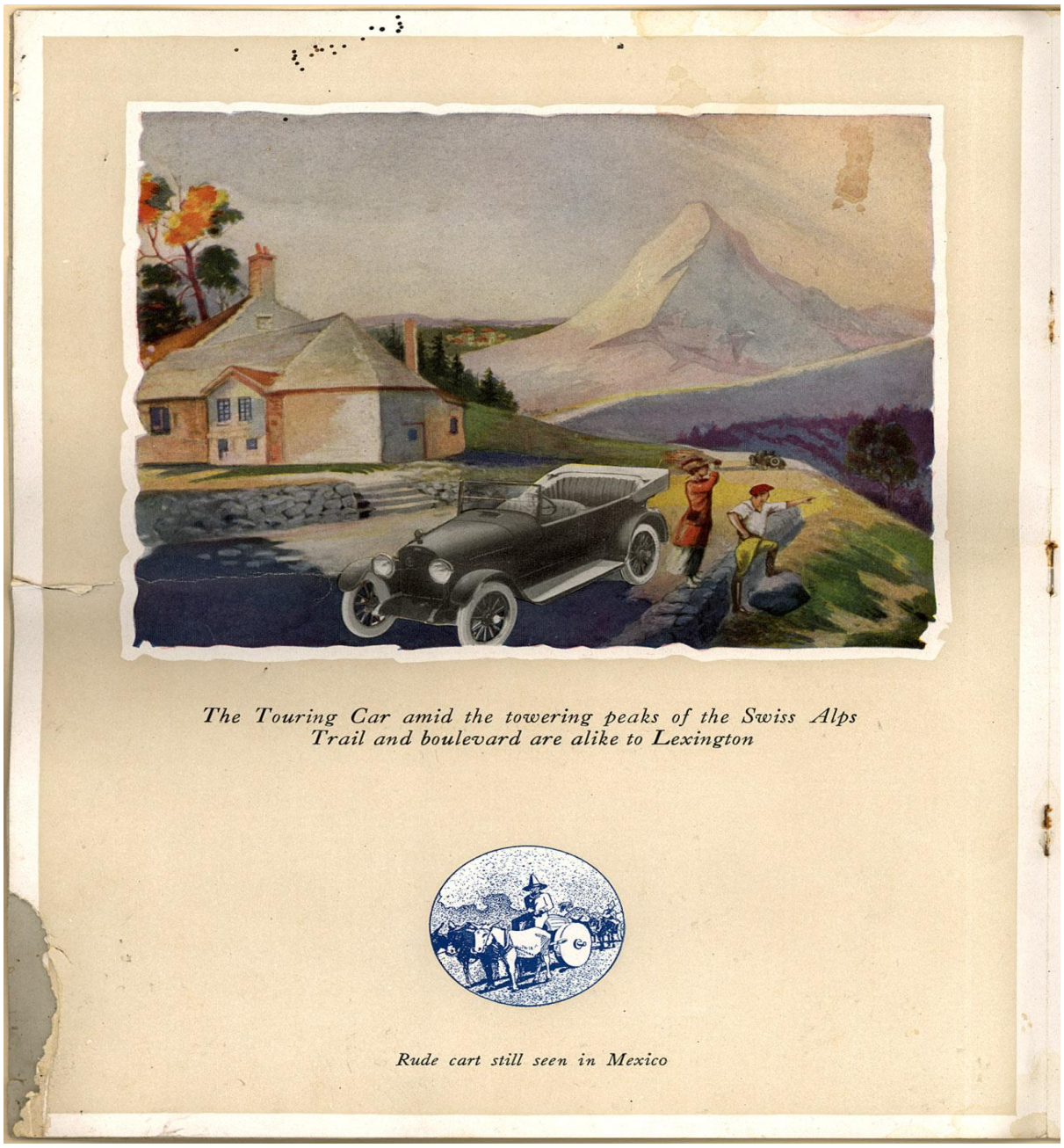

Figure 2

In this tableau, the appeal of the social content is anchored in the privileged lifestyles afforded by a tight but artistically influential minority of Americans for whom an excursion of discovery to Alpine and Mediterranean Europe became a 'passage-of-rights.' American literature of the 1920s, most notably the work of the 'Lost Generation,' of willing exiles such as Ernest Hemmingway, John Dos Passos, F. Scott Fitzgerald and Malcolm Cowley galvanised an interest in the European centred trends of artistic modernism, whilst also using

the ‘Old World’ as a distant site for escaping the themes of individual alienation, rationalised management and urban confusion that dominated their reflections of American society during this period. Though their literature often focused on the travails of an absent and emotionally troubled elite class, their accompanying psychological desolation, and the fraught intra-elite, intra-generational struggle with their Custodian elders, the portrayals of a wealthy class whose interests in art, culture, travel and self-discovery were appropriated as the ‘good life,’ a facet of the aesthetic of the American Dream of aspiration, mobility and leisure. The achievements of this class are placed in stark contradistinction to America’s immediate neighbours in Mexico, where the slow-paced destitution of their society is embodied in the ‘Rude Cart.’

Figure 3

This tableau picks up on similar themes from the previous one, though this time the more 'practical' Lex-Sedan (as opposed to the Touring Car) is depicted congenially alongside Flemish countryside women drawing water from a well. The encounter of wealth and mobility with 'backwardness' once again highlight the sense of innate superiority, producing

an aesthetic of distinct *American* progress; here even Europeans are depicted as being mired in traditional rural toil, the countryside (for Americans) being turned into a 'playground' for driving around and admiring. By placing a distinctly American advertisement in an *international* tableau, the image-makers served more than glorifying the automobile, but intrinsically achieved this through contrasting the idea of upward social mobility with a lifestyle that has been surpassed; the water-well of the Flemish, as well as the 'Ancient monocycle' of the Chinese.

Figure 4

'A well-known watering place' on the Atlantic Coast moves the tableau back to the US, and here the advertisement focuses once again focuses on leisure and gentility. The Coupe at the foreground intimates an Art Deco future resting at a serene, impressionistic depiction of quaint conversation and an undisturbed strolling. Japan- no stranger to industrialization or 'progress' during this period- has as its 'favourite vehicle' the two-wheeled *jinrishka*, pulled forward by human labour-power. The aesthetic convenience here is to showcase an elite,

leisure based class for the United States and a general depiction of Japan as being backward. The specificities of elite class lifestyle in the US are as such showcased as 'things as they are' in contrast to the idea that Japanese society in general has cultural preferences for more archaic lifestyle.

5.8 Mass Persuasion and Politics

Another figure of importance in the ascent of mass persuasion in the United States is Calvin Coolidge. Gaining the Presidency in 1923 following the death of Warren Harding, elected in his own right a year later and deciding not to stand for re-election when his term of office was completed in 1929, Coolidge straddles the entirety of the 'swinging' 20s in the United States, and was the first leader to articulate the role of advertising in modern America. Whereas Woodrow Wilson had organised the Committee for Public Information in 1917 as a nationwide bureau for the exercise and dissemination of wartime propaganda, Coolidge's backers and the people who were instrumental in cultivating his image- most notably Bruce Barton and Edward Bernays, meant that Coolidge was the first President to both harness and reflect upon the mass persuasion. In an address to the American Association of Advertising Agencies in October 1926, Coolidge spells out in clear terms the role that advertising will play in the United States:

"..as we turn through the pages of the press and the periodicals, as we catch the flash of billboards along the railroads and the highways, all of which have become enormous vehicles of the advertising art, I doubt if we realize at all the impressive part that these displays are coming more and more to play in modern life. Even the most casual observation, however, reveals to us that advertising has become a great business. It requires for its maintenance investments of great amounts of capital, the occupation of large areas of floor space, the employment of an enormous number of people, heavy shipments through the United States mails, wide service by telephone and telegraph, broad use of the printing and paper trades, and the utmost skill in direction and management. In its turnover it runs into hundreds of millions of dollars each year.
When we stop to consider the part which advertising plays in the modern life of production and trade we see that basically it is that of education. It informs its readers of the existence and nature of commodities by explaining the advantages to be derived from their use and creates for them a wider demand.
It makes new thoughts, new desires, and new actions. By changing the attitude of mind it changes the material condition of the people. Somewhere I have seen ascribed to Abraham Lincoln the statement that "In this and like communities public sentiment is everything. With public sentiment nothing can fail; without it nothing can succeed; consequently he who holds public sentiment goes deeper than he who enacts statutes or pronounces decisions. He makes statutes and decisions possible or impossible to be executed." Advertising creates and changes this foundation of all popular action, public sentiment, or public opinion. It is the most potent influence in adopting and changing the habits and modes of life, affecting what

we eat, what we wear, and the work and play of the whole Nation. Formerly it was an axiom that competition was the life of trade. Under the methods of the present day it would seem to be more appropriate to say that advertising is the life of trade."[406]

Coolidge's address poignantly surmises the attitude and belief in modern advertising that many 'apostles of modernity' and 'architect of desire' sitting in that room would have held. In the midst of unprecedented prosperity and no indication of the troubles that lay ahead, by 1927, advertisers received the acknowledgement that they had so craved. Yet closer inspection of Coolidge's relationship with the social agents of mass persuasion may account for his enthusiasm- for his tenure in office, his rise to the apex of political power in the United States had been the first genuine campaign orchestrated by the machinery of mass persuasion.

Seven years earlier in 1920, Bruce Barton- founder of Barton, Durston and Osbourn in 1917, and author of *The Young Man's Jesus* (1914) and *The Making of George Groton* (1918)[407], wrote a political pamphlet *Calvin Coolidge: A Man With a Vision, But Not a Visionary*. At the time, Coolidge was Governor of Massachusetts, and had gained a regional reputation as a tough strike-breaker and upholder of the law after he sent in the National Guard to combat rioting policemen from the Boston Police Force in 1919. Previously, despite his focus and internal ambition, he had generally been regarded as ineffectual and lacking initiative. The popularity and support that had facilitated his rise to the Governorship stemmed from his image as 'standing for a more comprehensible, simpler America.'[408]

Following the strike break, Coolidge's stock within the Republican Party hierarchy began to rise, and his trademark 'reliability' began to attract powerful and influential mentors. His own belief in small government lent him particularly well to backers who saw him as someone who would work in the interest of the economy- i.e., business. Frank Stearns, a Boston department store magnate and Dwight Morrow, a financier from JP Morgan, would prove to be the most important, with Morrow enlisting the help of Barton in November 1919 to 'humanize' Coolidge- who whilst respected within the Republican Party for his 'reliability,'

[406] Excerpt from Calvin Coolidge's address to the American Association of Advertising Agencies, Oct. 27th 1926. Accessed from Online Archive "Prosperity and Thrift: The Coolidge Era and the Consumer Economy, 1921-1929" http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?ammem/cool:@field%28DOCID+@lit%28ms221%29%29

[407] Barton books depicted hard-working salesmen whose Protestant 'work ethic' were the centrepiece of his own beliefs about advertising. *The Young Man's Jesus*, ostensibly written as a children's guide to the life of Jesus, re-imagined Jesus as a modern day salesman.

[408] Kerry Buckley, 'A President for the "Great Silent Majority": Bruce Barton's Construction of Calvin Coolidge,' *The New England Quarterly*, vol. 6, no. 4, pg 593

found it hard to shake of his public reputation as being 'cold, taciturn and reclusive.' For Morrow, there were deeper reasons for backing Coolidge- Morrow was a leading light in Wall Street who wanted to stabilize long-term investment in Europe through government sanctioned lending and unrestricted access to international markets- the long term goal being the transfer of international financial power and leadership from London to New York. For the investment bankers headed by Morrow, this meant that economic considerations rather than political ones should be the basis of foreign policy- and they regarded this as 'normal.' Coolidge was regarded as someone who would not provide any obstacles for this goal.[409] As such, Coolidge's name began to be circulated around as a potential nominee for the Republican Presidential Candidate at their convention in 1920.

Barton's importance in this is that he 'was amongst the first to grasp what a burgeoning American consumerism meant for the conduct of politics. He had been the editor for a Sunday magazine, *Every Week,* where he honed in a style focusing on inspiration and uplift, and also provided screenplays for films for the Committee for Public Information. Jackson Lears argues that Bruce Barton was a crucial figure in legitimating corporate business values and to 'bridge the gap between an economy based on a Victorian ethic of production and self-denial and a consumer economy based on self-fulfillment,'[410] and 'like many Americans who came of age around the turn of the century, Barton struggled with conflicting impulses. He was drawn to the rugged self-reliance and simplicity of an earlier America, yet he was fascinated, too, by the glittering prospects of an emerging consumer culture.'[411]

After being enlisted by Morrow, Barton's task was to *introduce* Coolidge as a political commodity, not by discussing the issues of the day but by presenting a personality with whom Americans could identify.'[412] In his pamphlet on Coolidge (originally printed in 'Woman's Home Companion,' March 1920), Barton set about the 'construction' of Coolidge as personality:

"*The great majority of Americans are neither radicals nor reactionaries. They are middle-of-road-folks who own their homes and work hard, and would like to have the government get back to its old habits of meddling with their lives as little as possible.*" "*It sometimes seems*

[409] Ibid, pg. 600
[410] Lears, Jackson *Fables of Abundance: A Cultural History of Advertising in America*, Basic Books, 1995, pg. 215
[411] Buckley, Kerry 'A President for the "Great Silent Majority": Bruce Barton's Construction of Calvin Coolidge,' *The New England Quarterly* (2003, 6:4), pg. 597
[412] Ibid.

as if this great silent majority had no spokesman, but Coolidge belongs with that crowd: he lives like them, he works like them and he understands."[413]

Barton's construction of Coolidge's image is aimed directly at the 'great majority of Americans,' and contains a number of presumption about *their* preferences and ideals about personality and character, which Barton assumes would like to be reflected in their politicians. With the rapidly rising 'White Collar' classes in mind, Barton's depiction of a potential future presidential candidate as a 'man-of-the-people,' using a widely read Woman's lifestyle magazine as the main media of dissemination was a far cry from the traditional ways of portraying leading politicians, whose rise through party ranks were dependent on the systems of patronage rather than achieving public consent.

Overall, Barton's text is presented in a straightforward manner, as if in a private conversation with an individual. Anecdotal about his family history and engaged in creating Coolidge as an independent man who could have used patronage if he had wanted, but instead worked hard and dedicated his time to serve the people and uphold the principles of the constitution and the 'traditions of the forefathers.' Barton's central claim for Coolidge is the one that appears to resolve that contradiction between Custodian and Filiarch, between the Victorian era and the rapid-Tempo of the modern era:

"*I said at the beginning of this article that there are certain old-fashioned characteristics of Coolidge that are exceedingly refreshing in these ultra-modern days. Most obvious amongst them is the simplicity of his living. He is always well dressed. But beyond this his living is conducted on the plane of the most ordinary citizen.*"[414]

This appeal to ordinariness is at the same time an appeal to the idea of equality, or at least achievable equality. Similar to the developments in advertising, Barton's PR work for Coolidge showcased 'ordinariness' and the 'everyday life' when in fact these things were out of reach for most people. But by articulating in a way that appealed to the *sentimentality and emotion* behind it, Barton was able to circumvent this potential contradiction.

Barton called Coolidge a 'contemporary forefather.' He was portrayed as a man whose ideals and ambitions for the country are rooted in those of the country's forefathers, yet in tune enough to recognise the opportunities afforded by the new modern America. Barton,

[413] Excerpt from 'Calvin Coolidge: A Man with a Vision- But Not a Visionary.' Accessed from Online Archive "Prosperity and Thrift: The Coolidge Era and the Consumer Economy, 1921-1929" http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/ampage?collId=amrlg&fileName=lg66page.db&recNum=3&itemLink=r?ammem/coolbib:@field%28NUMBER+@band%28amrlg+lg66%29%29

[414] Ibid.

alongside Albert Lasker and Claude Hopkins (and to an extent Stanley Resnor) can be considered to fit, ideationally, between the more productivist, Custodian attitudes of Henry Ford, and the more direct 'Filiarch' prototypes who served their early apprenticeships in the advertising industry during this period (i.e., those that came into leadership and maturity in the Cold War era).

A few years later in 1923, following the death of Warren Harding, Coolidge took office as President, but was required to win the election the following year. His image, whilst improved, remained one of detachment. It would be Edward Bernays that orchestrated the next main Coolidge campaign, and the following section details Bernays' work with Coolidge as well other examples of Bernays' PR work, which will show clearly the 'holistic' practices and ties between social agents from PR, advertising, and journalism, and how they mediated political, economic and artistic issues during the ascent of the *art of mass persuasion*.

5.9 Edward Bernays: the 'Aesthetics of Hegemony'

By 1923, Bernays had set up his own PR agency on Madison Avenue. Having garnered a degree of notoriety with his 'Torches of Freedom' publicity stunt[415], Bernays would then go onto orchestrate two major PR campaigns which further demonstrate the efficacy of PR and mark its entry as a potent influence and shaper of both political and economic affairs during 'peacetime'; first the 'Breakfast with Coolidge' stunt, and secondly, the 'Art in the Fashion Industry' movement for the Cheney Brothers between 1923 and 1927. Whilst the first campaign showcases Bernays innovative personal contribution to the stylisation of politics, the second resonates more broadly with themes of culture and art and how they impacted on the growing mass consumption society, as Bernays was instrumental in convincing the textile and fashion industries to incorporate artistic considerations into their products. These primary case studies are taken from Bernays personal typescripts to be found at:

The Library of Congress Archive: 'Edward L. Bernays Papers. Typescript on Public Relations Work and Politics, 1924: Breakfast with Coolidge'
http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/ampage?collId=amrlm&fileName=me02page.db&recNum=3&itemLink=D?coolbib:10:./temp/~ammem_PAvc::

[415] Bernays orchestrated a 'suffragette' campaign to promote smoking cigarettes amongst women, which at the time had been viewed as a social taboo; press attention was focused on a May Day Parade where 'suffragettes' simultaneously lit their 'torches of freedom.' These suffragetes were actually young actresses, see BBC documentary *The Century of the Self (2002)*

5.9.1 *Breakfast*

"People thought Coolidge was cold and taciturn. His introverted personality didnt appeal to free-wheeling Americans."[416] Theodore Roosevelt's daughter, Alice Longworth, had referred to Coolidge as 'weaned on a pickle,' a sobriquet that Bernays believed was damaging- moreover he makes it clear this negative reputation 'spread through the country.' His task as such was 'How could Coolidge's warmth and human sympathy be emphasized?'
Bernays' strategy to 'humanize' Coolidge was to create and publicize an 'open' breakfast where the President would be surrounded by actors and actresses, because "there was no disputing that they carried a strong combination of humanness, warmth, extroversion and camraderie."[417]

Bernays had concluded that the association of popular film stars would offer the 'greatest amount of publicity with the greatest potentiality for humanizing the President.' Here, it is not so much Bernays' acknowledgement that the right kind of 'publicity' for key political figures was of ever more increasing important in a society which was being increasingly exposed to and influenced by mass communications, but rather the focus on the 'humanization' aspect of Coolidge's character. Of course, we know that Coolidge was a human, and that his stature as a politician must have already been relatively secure due to the fact that he had already been elected president. What is of importance here is Bernays' intervention in terms of the maintenance of popularity of the office of the President and his idea of 'hooking' the figure that occupies that office to the broader real or perceived cultural trends (and thus opening up the possibility of 'opening up' a cultural trend through enacting this in the mass communications structure)- in this case the idea that film stars exude a warmth and popularity and enjoy an influential status amongst the voting public. Bernays notes that the President 'recognized the implications of his venture into imagemaking.'

Bernays organised an 'important and *newsworthy*' group, led by entertainer Al Jolson, to meet the President for breakfast.[418] With no official from the White House to organise the hand-shaking ceremony and introduction with the President, Bernays took up this function

[416] Library of Congress Archive, pg. 4
[417] Ibid.
[418] Ibid, pg. 6 In a noteworthy aside, Bernays remembers that two actresses, the Dolly sisters were late to Washington Central Station and after rebuking them, they explained that they 'don't start working on nothin' until we have our coffee.' "*These young women took their egos and their democracy literally*."

himself, and when at the end Coolidge stepped up to him and requested his name, Bernays replied, "oh, Mr. President, that's not important, i'm only the publicity man for the party."[419] This demonstrates to an extent what Bernays would later articulate in both *Propaganda* and the *Engineering of Consent*- that the function of PR was to remain in relative anonymity, working behind the scenes as the faceless force driving interaction between disparate groups of people and their interests. David Miller and William Dinan argue that even nearly a century later, 'this is how PR people like it- covert, subterranean, in the dark. PR operatives are technicians in the back room ensuring that corporations and governments are able to pursue their interests, just so long as no light is cast into the shadows.'[420]

Further evidence of Bernays' keen eye for socio-cultural trends was the penning of a short jingle to be sung on the White House lawn after breakfast by Al Jolson, called 'Keep Coolidge.'

The race has begun
And Coolidge is the one,
The one to fill the presidential chair,
Without a lot of fuss
He did a lot for us,
So lets reciprocate and keep him there![421]

By mobilizing the increasing popularity of the radio advertisement jingle, Bernays had staged a twin coup; simultaneously garnering the 'humanizing' aspect of Coolidge with his association with popular entertainers as well as sending a message to the voting public through a medium (the short jingle) that perfectly showcased the 'straight-talking' and 'free-wheeling' language that he (correctly) assumed would mark a memorable imprint upon the collective consciousness of the masses. Therefore Bernays in his lone role as a PR agent had not only acted as node in the communication between a elite political force and its detached and distanced public, but had *stylised* the event to the extent that the next morning, the 'Breakfast Party,' had made front page news across the country, with the influential *New York Times*, *New York Herald and New York Tribune* all carrying detailed depiction of the characters and events of the morning. Interestingly, Bernays had organised the event under a 'third-party' called the *Coolidge Non-Partisan League*, yet he was annoyed that the

[419] Ibid, pg. 7
[420] Miller, David and Dinan, William *A Century of Spin: How Public Relations Became the Cutting Edge of Corporate Power*, London: Pluto Press, 2007, pg. 13
[421] Libary of Congress Archive, pg. 9

newspapers chose to ignore this and deemed the actors and actresses to have been a part of the 'Theatrical Republican League.':

"*This was one of the fortunes of war. One can plan an event, cover every foreseeable contingency. But you cant control them- as is the case when the two main purposes of the breakfast party were omitted in the New York Herald, New York Tribune, bumped by more glamorous aspects of the event.*"

It is furthermore instructive to note Bernays own reflections of his role in the event:

"*If someone had at the time accused me of helping to change the image of Calvin Coolidge, I would have said 'go fly a kite.' I was applying an old press technique of adding newsworthy names to the austere person of the President of the United States in an event that jutted out of the routine of circumstance and made news."*

"I was thoroughly aware of the implications of humanity and warmth the breakfast at the White House carried to the people of the United States."[422]

5.9.2 *Fashion*

Bernays situates his advice to the Cheney Brothers, an old New England Silk firm from Connecticut in the context of a broader cultural transformation that he believes began after the end of the First World War:

"*America became more nationalistic, more self-conscious. This new awareness of ourselves we expressed in new art, literature, music and drama. We declared ourselves independent of Europe. America wanted self-sufficiency not only in chemicals but also in cultural values and ideas*."[423]

It is debatable whether the yearning of American self-expression occurred only after the First World War, but Bernays' 'advice' can be seen as reflective of a cultural transformation that has already made itself visible and fashionable in the major urban areas, and by advocating this shift seems to be keenly aware of what this implies for firms and companies who risk ignoring it at the cost of their survival.

In terms of the fashion industry, Bernays remarks that 'we wanted to declare ourselves independent of Paris but were afraid to cut ourselves loose. American women wanted American fabrics, but they must be made with more style. Drab designs were not good

[422] Ibid, pg. 11
[423] Library of Congress Report, "Bernays Papers. Typescript on Art in the Fashion Industry, 1923-1927: Cheney Brothers" pg 1.

enough...and these new demands were extending in to other consumer fields. *Art in Industry* must not be restricted to textiles. It must extend into kitchen gadgets and furniture, into everything that went into common use in the home and outside. We began to realize that a machine-made product need not be ugly.'[424]

Bernays is referring to a movement that began in the early 20th century, a follow-on to the Arts and Crafts movement that was necessitated by the entry of many artisans into a competitive labour market for machine made household goods and sought to privilege the machine as the centre point for a new approach to art and the machine.

His PR counsel for the Cheney Brothers, 'old, stodgy and respected New England manufacturers,' from South Manchester (Connecticut) who 'dominated the town economically, socially, politically and ideologically,' would last five years, and resulted in the acceptance by the conservative, traditional family of the new techniques of art-in-industry. Bernays is clear in pointing out the obstacles presented by the family's attitude and values and lists those elements that accentuate the gravity of his task:

"*The Cheneys had a Puritan conscience, an inbred nature, inhibiting restraints and the ego-motivated self-centeredness and superiority of the New England upper class." Bernays disparagingly refers to pamphlet given to him by the Charles Cheney that explained their family history from the time of the original Cheney who had emigrated to England during the Norman conquest, through to their arrival in Massachusetts in the 17th century. 'The piece was written with the serious self-sufficiency of the Plantagenet or the Tudors.*'[425]

We might conclude from these remarks that Bernays was taking on no less than a definitive east coast Custodian clan, increasingly out of step with the culture of modernising America. Two of the brothers, 'one a painter and another a theatrical producer suffered ostracism from the family' on account of their deviance from the norms expected by this 'royal family of Americans.' Bernays therefore identifies the first obstacle in transforming the mindset of the Cheneys (and secure them on the path to increased profitability) as the archaic social and cultural values. He notes that when 'scientists in the 20th century began experimenting with strange synthetic yarns, Cheneys snooted them,' and squarely concludes that 'the Puritan spirit undoubtedly played a part in curbing their interest in style and fashion,' despite their trade being connected so closely to the garments industry. Another factor he identified was

[424] Ibid.
[425] Ibid, pg. 5

'their disdain for women...in 1923 no women held a responsible prostitution in the firm, although most of their manufactured products were bought by women.'

With regard to the actual products, Bernays describes them as 'conventional,' and 'old-fashioned' and noted competitors like Mallinson were looking for 'new art inspiration for their silks.'[426]

In order to overcome this problem, Bernays enlisted the assistance of Henry Creange, French industrial art designer who had recently arrived in America from Alsace-Lorraine looking for new connections in the US. Bernays describes the marriage of convenience between Creange and the Cheney brothers, for whom he was to become Art Director:

"*They recognized they needed each other. Creange...lived in a world of his own creation, concerned primarily with his own advancement. He regarded me and others as tools to satisfy his drive to achieve his ambition, not money or power, but the satisfaction of having himself pointed out as the man who made Cheney Brothers the style leader in the United States, the symbol for art in industry in the US., 'I am the man!*'"[427]

We can see here a demonstration of how social agents (Creange) influenced by ideas and style of artistic modernism interacted with the austere, Custodian elite classes in the US to produce a vibrant resolution to problems of profitability and decline. Creange's motives were completely different to those of the Cheneys- wishing to gain cultural status and infamy, he is an exemplar of those in the creative industries with antagonistic or ambivalent attitudes to capitalism and industrialism who nonetheless provided the styles and techniques for the new industrial mode of capitalism emerging under conditions of mass production during that period. Relating this to Gramsci's ideas of how consensus is formed, or how social norms and values are embedded to the extent that they become a part of the ideational fabric of the everyday life, this antagonistic relationship between two disparate actors should be considered as an *aesthetic* contestation that unravels during the processes of transformation of political-economic formations. In other words, rather than hegemonic ideas emanating from the apex of political-economic power and being consensualized downwards through society (through processes of co-option), this example should show how *unintended* and seemingly un-natural alliances between archaic capital and artistic modernism shifted the very terrain of

[426] Ibid, pg. 11
[427] Ibid.

hegemonic ideas from the Custodian attitudes of piety and simplicity in design towards modern ornamentation and superficial stylisation.[428]

The impression given by Bernays about working with Creange is one of pure excitement. Rather than planning strategies of deception and manipulation, Bernays was 'willing to be his tool,' because 'he stimulated me,' and he found that 'we were both relating silk to social, political and ideological situations, making it a part of the stream of life itself.'[429] Similar to the copywriters and illustrators of Roland Marchand's *Advertising the American Dream*, Bernays as a PR agent for Cheney Brothers has his mind focused on the task- that is, to increase the profitability of his client- but also enjoyed the 'buzz' and excitement of learning about new techniques and designs. The collaboration between Bernays and Creange resulted in a manifesto that was published by The New England Council called "The Three Phase System for the Mass Production of Style Goods: A Plan for Lifting New England Manufacturers Out of Price Competition."

The plan consisted of seemingly obvious phases of 1) novelties, 2) improvement of the preceding year's innovations, and 3) 'staples'. More important than the plan itself was what Bernays conducted afterwards to initiate the plan.

"*I thought of phase 1, 2, 3 whenever I saw a beautiful painting, a lovely building, a provocative sculpture. I tried to evaluate the inspiration it might have for silk. Sometimes the color of a dress worn by my dinner partner started a chain reaction later reflected in a Cheney innovation. I kept closely in touch with aesthetic trends, trying to anticipate what impact new ideas in one field might have in another.*"[430]

Bernays had also admitted before that he 'had no interest in style as such,' yet he co-ordinated a vigorous public relations campaign, ensuring that he cultivated cultured onions on aesthetics and style in order to present a face of legitimacy to those in the industry. The strategy included[431]:

1) Building up relations of Cheney Brothers with the trade and the opinion moulders and group leaders.
2) We organized a network of fashion news and interpretation to establish the authenticity of what was to follow

[428] Lears, Jackson *Fables of Abundance: A Cultural History of Advertising in America*, Basic Books, 1995, pg. 36
[429] Library of Congress Archive, pg. 12
[430] Ibid, pg. 16
[431] Ibid. List taken from Bernay's personal notes.

3) A free style service gave the fashion editors of the country authentic news about silk usage and style in Paris and New York.
4) We sent out croquis, drawings of dresses, to newspapers.
5) We photographed pretty girl models in Cheney silks and sent their photographs to 150 rotogravure sections of newspapers.
6) We added a free mat service for 300 small newspapers.
7) We correspond with hundreds of newspaper editors

Bernays also details how they tried to combine the 'best features of French inspiration with those of South Manchester, Connecticut,' and used French terminology such as 'croquis' for 'fashion sketch,' 'a form of snobbery, I suppose.' They also made fashion information bulletins for salesmen in department stores, so 'after their perusal would talk more intelligently about yard length silks for dresses.' Perhaps the most enduring legacy of Bernays' PR strategy was this:

'*We wrote to a list of manufacturers from which Cheney had bought pencils, electrical supplies, ball bearings in the machinery that wove the silk, tags, shelving, billiard tables and vacuum cleaners, telling them we were willing to have them mention our name as users of their product in publicity and advertising*.'[432]

This represents an extra-ordinary effort on the part of Bernays and showcases his obsessive attention to detail to produce the desired goal- 'wide-spread publicity for Cheney resulted.' Following the arrangement of a presentation of silk to the wife of the then President, Warren Harding, as a 'tribute from the silk artisans of the country,' Bernays decided that in order to accentuate the *haute couture* status of Cheney silk, he travelled to Lyon, France, 'the great city of silk.'

"*I knew that a prophet, to be honored in his own country, must be honored in another. I arranged with the Textile Musuem in Lyon to accept three length of silk made by Cheney Brothers for inclusion in their exhibits*."

Yet even this could not quench Bernays' insatiable thirst for public engineering; having noted that Cheney's rivals, Mallinson's had recently published a series of prints that showed American 'shrines,' such as Washington's home at Mt. Vernon and the Grand Canyon, Bernays concluded that 'Style leaders engineered Mallinson's Americanism. Cheney had to meet this challenge.'

[432] Ibid, pg. 17

5.9.3 The Internationalization of Public Relations Strategy

Bernays' response was to capitalize on the 'nationwide interest aroused by the Tutankhamen discoveries in Egypt,' and convinced Creange and Cheney to set up the *Cheney Brothers Tut-ankh-Amen Award*, a scholarship to send a young American female designer to Egypt to study the excavations and come back to the US to create some silk designs inspired by what she saw. Bernays would go on to organise the infamous *National Soap Sculpture in White Soap Competition* at the behest of Procter and Gamble a few years later.

The recipient of the scholarship was Hazel Slaughter, who was presented with the Tutankhamen award at a silk exposition ceremony covered by the New York Times. Bernays writes triumphantly that 'overnight a little girl from Brooklyn became the heroine of a glamorous adventure that focused much publicity on her and on the Cheney Brothers pioneering spirit in silk design.'[433]

Within a year, the PR campaigning had started to pay dividends for Cheney Brothers, as their silks started to gain widespread recognition as an example of American manufacturing innovation; the 'art-in-industry' movement of Bernays and Creange started to influence other divisions of textiles, including a range of men's ties that Bernays labelled the 'radio-series,':

"...the preoccupation of the American people with the new gadget, radio, elicited a "radio series" of fast, vividly moving colors with the suggestion of "the mystery of the ether" the snap of static, the world of sound." The names of these ties illustrate public interest in radio: radiophoto, wave length, jazz music, radiogram, announcer, radio station, code static, dots and dashes, sounding off, criss-cross "He's in Paris."[434]

Recognising the increasing popularity of the radio medium, Bernays and Creange therefore created a fashion range that appealed to the modernist sensibilities of a new class of white collar workers, finding a way to capture the new experiential transformation induced by radio listening into the fabric of style and taste.

Further newspaper campaigns for the 'art-in-industry' movement created by Bernays and Creange resulted in the institution of an annual Gold Medal for the individual who had done most to advance art in industry, sponsored and judged by the Architectural League of New

[433] Ibid, pg. 22
[434] Ibid, pg. 23

York, and organised by the President of B. Altman and Company Department Store, Michael Friedsam- a figure who had been approached by Bernays in order to convince him about the art-in-industry movement. The first recipient was of course Creange.[435] The awards dinner at the Ritz Carlton was attended by luminaries of the Rockefeller institute, confirming upon the Creange the desired cultural reputation that he had been seeking since coming to America and joining with Bernays and the Cheneys.

Bernays' campaign continued with the project of gaining *international* cultural recognition for the Cheney Brothers. Creange had created a 'ferroniere' silk through an ironmonger, Edgar Brandt, and following some valuable publicity gained from draping the silk around Brandt's own ironworks in New York, Bernays suggested that the silks be taken for exhibiting at the Louvre in Paris.

"*Here we had a wonderful example of cultural cross fertilization, hands across the sea. American silks showed recognition to French art and France showed recognition to American manufacture*."[436]

The important point here is that Bernays engineered a situation where a traditional textile manufacturer's product had undergone a transition in a year from being a drab, outdated fashion to something considered to be 'art'; recognised by the perceived cultural superiority of the French (which despite American attempts of freeing itself from the burden of European cultural and artistic emulation still remained associated with 'high' taste).

"The students of perception have found that people see in art what their culture permits them to see. This is true of music and paintings, as it is of silk design. And what had been done of course was to get these department stores to make possible new perceptions to the Cheney silk, by tying it up with the new art movement.

Great crowds came to the opening in Paris which was given official sanction by the presence of our Ambassador, Myron Herrick, Paul Leon, Minister of the Beaux Arts, and hundreds of French and American notables. We sent Arthur Waldron to drape the silks. Newspapers reported the event here on February 28, 1925 and this in turn stimulated a whole flow of editorial comment."[437]

[435] Ibid, pg.24
[436] Ibid, pg. 26
[437] Ibid, pg. 27

Bernays here establishes a chain of linkages regarding the relationship of the PR industry to art and to the commercial market- 'create' new perceptions of a product through its association with a new, fashionable artistic movement (in this case, one that Bernays had put together with Creange), encouraging sales outlets to portray the new product and art movement in a certain way through association with an internationalised cultivated artistic culture by way of endorsement from foreign dignitaries and then to re-circulate the narrative in stylised form through editorial comment.

The overall result was an acceptance by the Cheney brothers for the need for Public Relations management, and more broadly accentuating the breakdown of their Custodian attitudes towards mass production and mass consumption:

"*Cheney Brothers, despite its traditions, now accepted the principle of organized public relations. They set up a public relations committee which held weekly meetings at the company offices on 34th Street. Colonel Heckman, the sales manager; Ward Cheney, just out of Yale; Miss Goldsmith of our office; the advertising manager and I, discussed problems as if we were settling the affairs of the world at a summit conference. Our meetings had all the hallmarks of high diplomacy -- ego projection, retreat, politics, deals, and fulfillment of purpose to some degree.*"[438]

Further initiatives undertaken by Bernays include; the publication of a book of the history of textile design, published by Doubleday and containing advertisements for Cheney Silks; providing Cheney silk gowns for a Hollywood motion picture; and further galvanising the art-in-industry movement by arranging a 'close entente' with Charles Richards, head of the American Association of Museums.

Through Richards, Bernays pulled of a masterstroke which showcases the intimate connection between commerce, art and politics: Richards was a personal associate of the then Secretary of Commerce, Herbert Hoover, and arranged for the appointment of himself, Creange, and Frank S. Holmes of Lennox Pottery to act as Official U.S. Commissioners to the 'International Exposition of Decorative and Industrial Art in Paris, held in the summer of 1925. Bernays himself was appointed as an associate commissioner to take charge of arrival publicity and the arrangement of galas, dinners and champagne receptions. Using his contacts amongst Parisian journalists to make front page news in the *Paris Herald*, Bernays believed the event to cement both Franco-American friendship and exchange in the domain of modern

[438] Ibid., pg 28

art as well as showcasing to a variety of industrial leaders in the US the importance of the art-in-industry philosophy:

"*The exhibition had crystallized in the minds of the delegation support for the modern art trend. Since its members were influential in many different areas of industry and the professions, they soon translated their new beliefs into action. Storewide exhibitions which demonstrated the influence of the exposition were held at Lord & Taylor's and Mercy's*."[439]

Between 1925 and 1927, Bernays facilitated the trend of *transnationalizing* modern art; following Creange's decree that 'colors instead of design were to rule as the keynote for fashion,' Bernays 'discovered the young painter Georgia O'Keefe, a disciple and later wife of 'legend in his own lifetime,' Alfred Stieglitz, a photographer largely responsible for initiating the modern movement in photography in the US, advancing the art of photogravure printing and making photography an acceptable art form. Bernays describes O'Keefe and Stieglitz as being on the verge of destitution, angry at the treatment that American artists received, not even being able to afford a studio. Bernays offered them his own father's studio, and brought in their modernist techniques and ideas in colouring to the Cheney stable. At the same time, Creange excitedly brought in the Dutch Fauvist painter Kees Van Dongen. Van Dongen had already received acclamation amongst Parisian galleries, and Bernays and Creange believed the combination of O'Keefe's 'Americanness' and Van Dongen's revered reputation would combine to give Cheney silks an association with the 'Parisian high life.'

"*We sent a book about him to the art critics of the most important newspapers to encourage recognition of Van Dongen before the silk exhibit. Now I tried to other manufacturers willing to use Van Dongen for inspiration of their product. I induced the Almco Galleries, lamp manufacturers, to make 'lamps inspired by Kees Van Dongen, the French impressionistic genius whose influence has been so dominant in the world of modern art...*'"[440]

The lamps were to have shades made from Cheney silk- tying together an American painter, a Dutch artist, a New England textile manufacturer and an art deco lamp company, however was not enough for Bernays, who went on to 'persuade Broadway publicity men to co-operate with us by having their stars wear gowns made with Van Dongen silk.'

"*We sent the Van Dongen exhibit touring in art galleries through the country as far west as San Francisco. Leading department stores showed the silks with the panolly of promotion, newspaper advertisements and news space to mail to their customer*."

[439] Ibid, pg. 31
[440] Ibid, pg. 40. Note that Van Dongen was Dutch rather than French, and did not consider himself to be a impressionist.

"*The consistent pattern of art-in-industry and style leadership Cheney had followed over the preceding years was making its impact. People were looking to Cheney for leadership in beauty and style. The firm was receiving accolades it wanted and now deserved. Cheney Brothers, the stodgy old New England firm became Cheney Brothers, the great fashion house that combined the best features of Paris and New York. We had proved the validity of our three phase approach and the effectiveness of dramatizing the launching of new styles*."

The following points can be drawn from this case study of Edward Bernays' Public Relations Work:

Bernays, as a lone PR agent, was instrumental in creating 'third-party' advocacy, a technique of celebrities or fashionable endorsements through a chain of linkages for his clients or products. Remaining in the shadows, he mobilised disparate social and cultural agents from the US and Europe in order to achieve his goal of enhancing publicity for his clients and their aims (popularity for Coolidge, increased profitability for the Cheney Brothers). The ensuing co-ordination of agency resulted in 'hitching' together of political and economic goals with the ideals of cultural emulation, and in particular seems to have been instrumental in introducing ideas relating to the role of modern art in machine industry in the United States. Keeping in line with a *Sloanist* model of political economy, the desire for continually updated modes of style in products, mobilising artistic styles and techniques circulating in a transnational class of creatives, Bernays brought in artists to overcome the crisis of profitability experienced by some American industry; fusing together people whose motivation was not profit, but survival (in the case of Stieglitz and O'keefe) with those whose was profit

This speaks to an aesthetic rendering of a Gramscian theory of hegemony, as the domain of the superstructure (including ideas and artistic reflection) becomes vital in the social legitimation of transformations in the economic base; therefore rather than conceiving of a relationship that figures cultural transformations following on from economic transformation (e.g., the culture of mass consumption necessarily follows on from the transformations of mass production facilitate by Ford), there is rather a dialectical interplay whereby the power of agency to influence culture, style and fashion confirms a change in attitude of capitalist business *toward* mass production and acceptance of the new conditions of the US economy (as exemplified by the transformation of attitudes of the Cheney brothers).

The role of PR differs fundamentally from advertising in the style of co-ordination involved. Whilst the advertising industry employed in its service a number of different professions, PR

appears to have a broader *social* function in terms of the co-ordination of politics, economy and culture.

5.10 Conclusion

This chapter has argued that in order to grasp the power of public relations and advertising in the United States, they should be considered as industries of a broader *mass persuasion* complex. With common roots in the newsprint industry of the 19th century, public relations consultants and advertisers were reliant on each other to achieve their goals.

The industries of mass persuasion represent a collision of increasing attempts at making their work appear 'scientific' on the one hand, and using the latest trends in art, fashion, tastes and celebrity culture to achieve outcomes for their clients. It has been suggested that in this early phase (1900-1930), before the formalization of scientific theories of advertising and public relations, work was carried out in a haphazard, uncoordinated manner that actually provided the innovation and technique necessary to become powerful forces in American political-economic life.

Copywriters, illustrators and media experts all had to be aware of the latest trends in art and culture in order to make their product or client 'sellable.' Yet they also had to be aware of 'residual' cultures and be sensitive to the expectations and aspirations of emergent white collar classes. The apparent 'inclusivity' of mass persuasion- its ability to make it seem like corporations or politicians are delivering what people want- comes from this very malleability in techniques of imagization and dissemination. Those techniques and styles were influenced by developments in photography and artistic modernism, as well as appealing to vernacular sensibilities of efficiency and 'plainspeak.' The content and form likewise prioritized ideals of emulation and material aspiration, conforming with the promises of abundance and mobility that resided in the 19th century.

In their actual practice, advertisers differed in both their willingness to embrace new techniques and styles as well how they articulated their work. The NW Ayer agency, for example, showcase deep Custodian traits. They sought to imbue their work with 'educational; qualities and showed a distaste for the kind of 'fear' based advertising of other corporations. J Walter Thompson agency, on the other hand, show an enthusiasm for embracing the rhythms

of modernity, and a willingness to confront foreign markets with the 'latest' techniques, no matter how haphazard their research and findings were. It is of no surprise that Ford was a client of NW Ayer, whereas General Motors under Sloan pursued their expansion with J Walter Thompson agency at the helm.

The advertising campaign for Lexington automobiles from the Duke Library Digital Archives shows how the ideals of mobility were co-ordinated in a visualization of American mass persuasion. These advertisements contain the hallmarks of a Sloanist political economy, with different brands being marketed and situated in 'tableaux' that were designed to celebrate the American system in contradistinction to other part of the less developed world. It is here that the 'appeal' of consumption derives from, something that resonated in contemporary American 'soft power.'

This chapter has also demonstrated the intimate connection between media, politics and consumption. This was an era where politicians like Calvin Coolidge began to be 'marketed' in a similar way to commodities. Both Bruce Barton and Edward Bernays were sensitive to the need to make Coolidge appear like a more charismatic figure for the voting public. They both also understood the best way to do this was to combine the 'residual' attitudes of conservatism and plainspeak with the dynamism of a leader who understood and appreciated the cultural changes of the modern period.

Overall, it has been argued that the 'aesthetics' of hegemony require agencies of mass persuasion to delve into the sometimes antagonistic circulation of different cultures and 're-assemble' them in an image that can appeal to a 'mass society.' A universalizing tendency was created through this in the sense that it confirmed the strength of the ideal of upward mobility *over* class-based political action. The 'promise of abundance,' then become a terrain to be fought over in the domain of consuming culture, rather than in politics itself.

Conclusions

6.1 Capturing Hegemony

Like the neo-Gramscians, this thesis has aimed to demonstrate that the contemporary 'soft' power of the 'American way of life,' begins with transformations that took place in the early 20th century in the United States. However, it has prioritized the 'aesthetic' dimension of American hegemony, evaluating the role of art, culture and mass persuasion techniques in creating an enduring appeal for American products and American culture. Given the ubiquity of American cultural power, this has been a necessary project to re-animate the neo-Gramscian theories of International Political Economy, which have thus far evaded questions of culture and aesthetics.

In doing so, I have sought to demonstrate that the terrain of analysis for hegemony in the United States first requires a shift of epistemological focus towards *Sloanism* instead of *Fordism*. Whilst both 'systems' represent the culmination of technological innovations in mass production techniques, Sloanism provides a more dynamic framework of analysis because it accounts for processes in *mass consumption* as well. As has been argued, the Sloanist paradigm bestows centrality to the emulative strategies of brand differentiation and stylistic obsolescence. These techniques are an omnipresent feature of American and transnational corporate power in the contemporary period. As such, this thesis has re-situated the concept of hegemony in the same period as the neo-Gramscian analysis of Fordism, but takes into account the importance of Sloanist techniques as a means of consensualizing power in society. In this way, I would suggest that a theoretical framework which accounts for 'aesthetics' of hegemony helps us to better understand the appeal and power of contemporary American power. This power is anchored not just in the historical processes of compromise between capital and labour, but *also* in the way in which the 'American way of life' has been sold. Its highly *visual* aspect, through mass persuasion agencies in advertising and public relations, as well as through global media channels, must be accounted for in political-economic theory if a better realization of global power is to be sought.

As elaborated throughout this thesis, there is a missing 'moment' in neo-Gramscian theory which fails to account for these 'aesthetic' aspects. This is all the more surprising given that both Gramsci and the neo-Gramscian articulate hegemony as a system of power that achieves a moment of consent through ideological apparatuses. It seems, however, that the conception

of these ideological apparatuses reproduces the *materialist* understanding of cultural transformations as *following on* as corollaries from the fundamentals of the productive system from which people and societies reproduce themselves. In other words, processes of culture are 'superstructural' renditions of transformations in the 'economic base.' Culture is then reduced to mere function, and the *apprehension* of culture by social agents serves nothing more than a veil for power, a deception of progress, or a re-ification of the exploitative, competitive and atomizing conditions under which they survive. It appears to strip away the power of non-elite social agents from contributing to the hegemony of a society, leaving no room for their own aspirations, ideas or interests to make a transformatory impact on the broader arc of power.

I have demonstrated that the insights from Walter Benjamin's *The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction* provides some respite from this overly deterministic view of culture and political economy. Benjamin unlocks the historical uniqueness of culture under conditions of mass reproducibility, suggesting that it opens up the potential for subordinate social agents to *realize* that there could be an emancipated future. The reason for this is that the very availability of culture to the 'masses', despite the loss of 'authenticity' of the artwork, represents a sea-change in the parameters of *cultural* hierarchy. It is therefore the breakdown of cultural barriers that *anticipate a change in the politics of society*. As such, Benjamin's innovation was to provide a template through which we can grasp how social agents think about their political and economic demands in *cultural* terms. This holds special resonance in the United States, which had pervasive discourses of upward social mobility existing throughout the 19th century.

This approach forces us to re-think what non-elite groups in society actually wish for. It requires the analyst or critic of political-economy to be sensitive to the aspirations of social agents and the terms in which they depict what they are fighting for. In neo-Gramscian theory, as well as the Frankfurt school, consumption appears as a domain in which workers find *compensatory* modes of fulfillment, a refuge from the pressures generated by the atomization of working conditions, which include both de-skilling and increasing disciplining. This thesis suggests otherwise; that the domain of consumption can be somewhere in which political challenges are continually issued, as demands for a stake in mobility, rather than as 'analgesic' compensation. I believe this has important consequences for how International Political Economy theorizes about social transformations and the

broader arc of global hegemony. Instead of thinking about the mass culture industry as a branch of the totalizing influence of capitalism, it is possible to re-imagine it as an arena in which subordinated social groups can contribute their culture as an act of *emancipatory politics*.

As an example, the Frankfurt School dismissal of popular culture, particularly Jazz, is a part of their obsession with highlighting the importance of 'authenticity.' Schemas that delineate what constitutes 'proper' culture abound in Marxist discourses. As a result there is no chance to understand the emergence and popularity of Jazz as a 'moment' in which a highly repressed culture makes its voice heard, achieving popularity amongst diverse social groups who embraced it as 'fashionable.' In the scheme of the Frankfurt School, there is no avenue to explore *what that meant for people*. Did it act as a catalyst for improving race relations? Social Science does not have the tools to explore those kind of issues. It requires an aesthetic approach, to delve into the feelings of sensuality and ascribe virtue and beauty, in order to grasp how this affected people's daily lives. It requires an aesthetic approach to understand the appeal of Jazz culture during that period. Without these kinds of theoretical tools, any possibility of capturing the 'hegemonic' moment is doomed to recourse into materialist conceptions of power and production, because it does not *seek to understand the very processes that transform and affect the structures and apparatuses of ideology*.

6.2 Class and Class Consciousness

The issue of hegemony in the United States requires a further departure from the traditional Marxian frameworks. I have shown in this thesis that a defining feature of American society in the early 20th century was the emergence of a mass society. The curiosity of this emergence is that despite divergent cultural norms and values of those thought to constitute the 'mass,' they were ascribed *general* characteristics by social commentators who tried to grapple with the role and potential of this new social phenomenon. Marxist theories of political economy once again fall into this trap of over-generalization, and in the case of neo-Gramscians, the cultural desires and aspirations of the 'masses' are overlooked completely in favour of a materialist resolution in the factory site between capital and labour. It therefore sidesteps some of the key contestations and challenges that might also provide a fuller account of hegemony, and how consent was achieved amongst the mass of society.

I have argued that these contestations and challenges were fought over in the domain of aesthetics. The presumed stability of norms and values that are articulated as the centrepiece of how hegemony works in society comes into question in the United States during the latter part of the 19th century and beginning of the 20th century. Inter-generational conflicts *within* elite groups show how the stifling strictures of Victorian era morality and cultural norms were overcome by a younger generation who were willing to embrace modernity. They looked towards ideas of self-fulfillment, social equality and appreciation of other cultures as a means of experiencing the world. They rallied against the moral outlook of their elders because they did not provide an aesthetic template to fulfill their aspirations and interests.

This conflict is a key arbiter of the aesthetics of hegemony, as the challenge over cultural norms and artistic appreciation laid the groundwork for a Sloanist form of capitalism that prioritized those very same aspirations of the younger: and appreciation of the 'new,' the fulfillment of individual self-hood, and the equalization of different cultures. The rise of modernism, for example and its overcoming of academy-sanctioned during the Armoury Show of 1913 attests to the strength of the cultural voice of the younger generation. All these instances of the younger generation proclaiming a new era of their own- whether it be in painting, literature or architecture, or just in the way in which their conducted their lives- are tantamount to serious challenges to the cultural hegemony of the Custodians. The 'aesthetic' contestations between these two generations highlight their role in the arbitration of norms and values- of what constituted the 'common sense' of good judgement in thinking about issues from art to government.

6.3 Culture and Political Economy

By analyzing the transformation in structures of class an class consciousness, this thesis has demonstrated that in the United States, individuals and social groups did not apprehend culture as a functional corollary, but rather had 'space' in which to interpret and imbue cultural processes according to their own aspirations and interests. The conception of the Lockean Heartland as articulate by Kees Van der Pijl I believe to be crucial in this respect, particular what it means for the development of 'Civil Society.' Whilst Lockean ideas of private property and individual freedom fostered the commercialism and profiteering for which American society is renowned for, these same ideas provided an independence for

European settlers in America to foster their own vernacular cultures that were detached from the power of the state during the settlement of the West in the 19th century.

In doing so, they established not just their own vernacular art, but developed their own 'exceptional' aesthetic criterion of judgement of art and culture in contradistinction to the parameters of judgement favoured by East Coast elites. This vernacular aesthetic prioritized innovation, efficiency, sleekness and simplicity, as opposed to emulation of classical styles, ornamentations and European decorative refinement as favoured by the elites. The importance of this is the tension it lent to aesthetic practices and ideas of simplicity versus materialist demonstrations of wealth. It arguably culminates in artefacts like the Brooklyn Bridge, a work of both scientific and artistic achievement, one that both incorporated the heritage of vernacular engineering as well as the grandiloquence of internationally iconic architecture. These tensions were integrated into the 'aesthetics' of hegemony in the sense that large industrial projects such as the Ford plants at River Rouge and Highland, were not just thought about as scientific achievements, but also apprehended as cultural artefacts-imbued with virtue and beauty, and forming a part of a developing *iconology* of capitalism and mass industrialization. The thesis argues that taking an aesthetic approach to hegemony shows that these visualizations of paramount importance when thinking about how American power is understood and thought about, what it means to people in their daily lives.

The very idea that cultural artefacts should be designed to fulfill individuals' desire to experience beauty is something that played a large part in the formation of counter-hegemonic and 'anti-modern' ideas of art and craft. Beginning in mid 19th century England with John Ruskin, artists, designer and industrialists debated the merits of increasing mechanization in industry, reacting to the negative effect it was having on workers. They addressed political-economic issues through the domain of culture and art, arguing that products should be designed in order fulfill people's happiness. These ideas existed in a transnational circulation of ideas between Europe and America culminating in the highly politicized Bauhaus movement. These modernist practices initially rallied against mechanization and the crass materialism generated by capitalism and wanted their art and architectural designs to *reveal* forms of emancipatory and harmonious living. These alternative and counter-hegemonic practices and ideas as such hold appeal precisely because they are directed towards the improvement of people's daily lives. In short, they were to make people happy. Given that the Bauhaus and other modernists contributed to both the

design of mass consumable products *and* the techniques of mass persuasion in advertising and public relations, *I would argue that the moment of 'consent' occurs where the positive, emancipatory tones of modernism intersect and provide the means of conveying ideas for the new mass production, mass consumption society.*

6.4 The Possibilities for an *Aesthetic* Neo-Gramscian Political Economy

As stated from the outset, the purpose of this thesis is to highlight the enduring relevance of the 'aesthetic' as a means of giving a fuller realization to 'hegemony' in International Political Economy. It has, fundamentally, addressed a key problematique of *what* might be the appeal of American 'soft' power in the contemporary. By re-visiting the era in which neo-Gramscians begin their analysis of hegemony, I have demonstrated that grasping the aesthetic dimension of mass production-mass consumption processes allows us a number of additional conceptual and theoretical tools. In particular I have highlighted the importance of thinking about cultural and aesthetic issues as central to the formation of hegemony, rather than as corollaries to the more visibly obvious materialist relationships. Through this, we can 'broaden' out the social agents and groups involved in the formation of hegemony, and account for the *aesthetic* challenges that collide and change the nature and meaning of 'norms' and 'values.' I have also highlighted how these challenges to received cultural orders and transformation in artistic and cultural practices intersect with industries of mass persuasion. These things together, I believe give a fuller understanding of the 'hegemonic' moment.

In this respect, I believe that neo-Gramscianism is better equipped to theorize the more contemporary processes of 'globalization,' 'Americanization,' and 'transnationalization.' If we look at the 'aesthetics' of hegemony for example, analysis of policies such as the Marshall Plan and how the initial phase of 'Americanization' was received by other cultures could look to see how domestic cultural values were arbitrated with those 'coming from' America. In other words, if commentators really believe that the 'American Way of Life' is becoming the 'Global' way of life, then neo-Gramscian theory using 'aesthetics' may be well positioned to explain the power of that American way of life in terms of its appeal and consensualizng role in International Political Economy, complementing its already rigorous study on the more traditional Marxian, materialist aspects. It may contribute to explaining the power of 'transnational classes,' and how norms and values are arbitrated in the contemporary period.

Because of aesthetic contestations continue to resonate in the contemporary period. As an example, we could look at the phenomenon of the music industry as a branch of the global mass culture industry. One of the most globally popular styles is that of hip-hop. As a form of music it emerged in some of the most socio-economically deprived urban areas of late 1970s America, ghettoized enclaves that resided near demonstratively wealthier districts. The producers and consumers of this new sound were African-Americans, and the lyrics highlighted the poverty and exclusion felt by its community. In *techniques* of production, the music showcased unique innovations that would later became standard techniques of mass produced music. At the time it represented a political *and* cultural challenge, becoming a recognized and sometimes feared voice, drawing ire from conservative commentators.

Yet in the contemporary period, commentators speak of an entire hip-hop culture, that has branched out into fashion styles and in some instances influenced local vocabularies and lexicons. It is a ubiquitous form of popular music broadcast all over the world on syndicated music channels. Its *aesthetic* is a very modern version of the 'American way of life,' prioritizing an aesthetic of 'getting-rich-quick.' Yet how could a culture that emerged from conditions of political-cultural repression and economic exclusion become a part of the fabric and image of American power in today's world? It is the task of critical political-economists to pay attention to those cultural trends and be sensitive to the idea that cultural challenges and changes of aesthetic style do not always mean another moment in the relentless co-option of culture by totalizing capitalism, but that those challenges and trends contribute to the maintenance or transformation of hegemony precisely because they speak to individuals' values and aspirations, and in some cases may hold genuine emancipatory qualities.

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